*Politics in Asia*

# RISING ISLAMIC CONSERVATISM IN INDONESIA

## ISLAMIC GROUPS AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Edited by
Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim
and Alexander R. Arifianto

Universitas
Islam Internasional
Indonesia

# Rising Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia

This edited volume argues that the rise of Islamic conservatism poses challenges to Indonesia's continued existence as a plural state, with far-reaching implications for the social, cultural and political fortunes of the country. It contributes a model of analysis in the field of Indonesian and Islamic studies on the logic of Islamic conservative activism in Indonesia. This volume presents informative case studies of discourses and expressions of Islamic conservatism expressed by leading mainstream and upcoming Indonesian Islamic groups andinterpret them in a nuanced perspective. All volume contributors are Indonesian-based Islamic Studies scholars with in-depth expertise on the Islamic groups they have studied closely for years, if not decades.

This book is an up-to-date study addressing contemporary Indonesian politics that should be read by Islamic Studies, Indonesian Studies and, more broadly, Southeast Asian Studies specialists. It is also a useful reference for those studying Religion and Politics, and Comparative Politics.

**Leonard C. Sebastian** is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Indonesia Programme, Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Professor (Adjunct), Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, University of Canberra, Australia.

**Syafiq Hasyim** is a Lecturer and Director of the Library and Cultural Center at the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII).

**Alexander R. Arifianto** is a Research Fellow with the Indonesia Programme, Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) – Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

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## Islamic Groups and Identity Politics

**Edited by**
**Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim and Alexander R. Arifianto**

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**This book is dedicated to the memory of Professor Bahtiar Effendy (1958–2019) – a public intellectual, scholar, mentor and friend.**

# Contents

*List of illustrations* ix
*List of contributors* xi
*Acknowledgements* xiii
*Abbreviations* xv

1 Introduction: Rising Islamic conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic groups and identity politics 1
LEONARD C. SEBASTIAN, SYAFIQ HASYIM AND ALEXANDER R. ARIFIANTO

2 Muslim identity and deprivation: socio-psychological sources of support for Islamist radical groups in Indonesia 14
BURHANUDDIN MUHTADI AND RIZKA HALIDA

3 Islamic orthodoxy at the regional level in Indonesia 40
DADI DARMADI

4 Examining the growth of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia: the case of West Java 54
IRMAN G. LANTI, AKIM AND WINDY DERMAWAN

5 Resisting conservatism: Muhammadiyah's experience through its social activities 80
AHMAD NAJIB BURHANI

6 Challenging moderate Islam in Indonesia: NU Garis Lurus and its construction of the "authentic" NU online 95
ASEP M. IQBAL

7 MUI and its discursive relevance for "Aksi Bela Islam": a growing trend of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia 116
SYAFIQ HASYIM

8 The rise and fall of "transnational" Islam in Indonesia: the future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) 133
MASDAR HILMY

9 Why do Islamist movements: die? Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia and its decline 146
M. IQBAL AHNAF

10 The PKS and Tarbiyah movement: its agenda and future in Indonesia 163
YON MACHMUDI

11 Indonesian hybrid Salafism: Wahdah Islamiyah's rise, ideology and Utopia 181
ANDAR NUBOWO

12 Creating entrepreneurial and pious Muslim subjectivity in globalised Indonesia 198
NAJIB KAILANI

13 Epilogue: Conservative Islam and the dilemma of Indonesian democracy 210
LEONARD C. SEBASTIAN, SYAFIQ HASYIM AND ALEXANDER R. ARIFIANTO

*Index* 222

# Illustrations

## Figures


2.1 Percentage of awareness and level of support for four Islamist groups 19
2.2 Percentage of support among Muslims for Islamist groups over time (2006–2017) 21
2.3 Percentage of income groups by religion 30
2.4 Percentage of education attainment by religion 31
2.5 Collective deprivation score of three items 38


## Tables


2.1 Regression analysis for determinant variables predicting support for Islamist groups 26
2.2 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of support of Islamist organisations and predictor variables 39
4.1 The votes shares of Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the 1955 general election 68
4.2 The votes shares of Jokowi and Prabowo in the 2014 general election 68
4.3 The votes shares of Jokowi and Prabowo in the 2019 general election 68
4.4 Number of votes attained in the 2019 presidential election of West Java (including Banten) – per sub-region 70
4.5 List of interviews 77
5.1 Typology of Muhammadiyah members 83

# Contributors

**Leonard C. Sebastian** is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Indonesia Programme, Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Professor (Adjunct), Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, University of Canberra, Australia.

**Syafiq Hasyim** is a Lecturer and Director of the Library and Cultural Center at the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII).

**Alexander R. Arifianto** is a Research Fellow with the Indonesia Programme, Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) – Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

**Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf** is a Lecturer at the Centre for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

**Akim** is Head of the Centre for International, Gender, and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Indonesia and a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations in the same university.

**Ahmad Najib Burhani** is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for the Study of Society and Culture, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Jakarta, Indonesia.

**Dadi Darmadi** is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Ushuluddin, State Islamic University Syariah Hidayatullah Jakarta and Senior Researcher at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), Jakarta.

**Windy Dermawan** is Head of the Centre for ASEAN, Asia, Africa, and Middle East Studies in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Indonesia and a Lecturer at the same faculty.

**Rizka Halida** is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Psychology, University of Indonesia (UI), Depok, West Java, Indonesia.

**Masdar Hilmy** is Rector of State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia.

**Asep M. Iqbal** is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Dakwah, State Institute of Islamic Studies, Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia.

**Najib Kailani** is a Lecturer in the Department of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies, Graduate School, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

**Irman G. Lanti** is President of the International Relations Alumni Association, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Indonesia and a Lecturer in the Political Science Programme, Graduate School, National University, Jakarta, Indonesia.

**Yon Machmudi** is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Postgraduate Programme in Middle East and Islamic Studies, School of Strategic and Global Studies, University of Indonesia, Depok, West Java, Indonesia.

**Burhanuddin Muhtadi** is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, Indonesia and Executive Director, Indikator Politik Indonesia, a public opinion research and consultancy firm.

**Andar Nubowo** is a PhD student in the Department of Philosophy, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France and a Lecturer at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Indonesia.

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We, the contributors, bear responsibility for the views, interpretations, and any errors in the book.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABI | *Aksi Bela Islam* (Defending Islam Movement) |
| Bappenas | *Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional* (National Development Planning Agency) |
| DI/TII | *Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia* (Darul Islam/ Indonesian Islamic Army) |
| DSN | *Dewan Syariah Nasional* (National Sharia Council) |
| FPI | *Front Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defenders Front) |
| FUI | *Forum Umat Islam* (Islamic *Ummah* Forum) |
| Gerindra | *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* (The Great Indonesia Movement Party) |
| GNPF MUI | *Gerakan Nasional Pembela Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (National Movement to Defend *Fatwa* of the Council of Indonesian Ulama) |
| GP Ansor | *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor* (Ansor Youth Movement) |
| HMI | *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia* (Indonesian Muslim University Students Association) |
| HTI | Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia |
| ISIS | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| JI | Jamaah Islamiyah |
| KPU | *Komisi Pemilihan Umum* (Indonesian Election Commission) |
| MMI | Majelis Mujahiddin Indonesia |
| MUI | *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Council of Indonesian Ulama) |
| NKRI Bersyariah | *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia Bersyariah* (Unitary State Republic of Indonesia with Sharia) |
| NU | Nahdlatul Ulama |
| NUGL | *Nahdlatul Ulama Garis Lurus* ('Straight Path' Nahdlatul Ulama) |
| PAN | *Partai Amanah Nasional* (National Mandate Party) |
| PDI-P | *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) |
| Perda | *Peraturan Daerah* (Regional Government Regulations) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Perppu | *Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang* (Government Regulation in lieu of Law) |
| Persis | *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic Union) |
| Perti | *Persatuan Tarbiyah Islam* (Union of Islamic Character Education) |
| PK | *Partai Keadilan* (Justice Party) |
| PKB | *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (National Awakening Party) |
| PKS | *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (Prosperous Justice Party) |
| PPP | *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (United Development Party) |

# 1 Introduction

## Rising Islamic conservatism in Indonesia: Islamic groups and identity politics

*Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim and Alexander R. Arifianto*

### Introduction

The role of Islam in both state and society has been a central tension in the understanding of the foundations of the Indonesian nation since it achieved independence in 1945. Sukarno, Indonesia's founding father, had famously developed the Pancasila (literal meaning, "Five Principles"), a set of broad principles flexible enough to accommodate the archipelago's cultural and religious diversity while serving as a source of unity. Enshrined in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, the first tenet of Pancasila – the "Belief in Almighty God" – remains controversial right up to today. This was because the first principle's original formulation, namely the "Belief in Almighty God with the obligation to carry out Islamic *shari'ah* for its adherents", had underscored the aspirations of Islamists throughout Indonesian history who sought to establish a state based on Islamic law.

Although nationalist considerations had thus far prevailed, particularly the nightmarish scenario of the disintegration and breakup of a country with substantial non-Muslim minorities if an Islamic state was to be formed, contestation over the nature of the Indonesian state remains current. The present configuration of the Indonesian state is one that is neither secular nor Islamic. Rather, Indonesia is a "religious" state. It is a religious state insofar as it positions "Almighty God" as the first tenet of Pancasila, guarantees the freedom of worship for its six official religions, and encourages religious piety while blasphemy is punishable by law. Just as President Obama had a custom of ending speeches with the phrase "God Bless America", Indonesian politicians tend to begin speeches with Arabic phrases such as *Assalamualaikum*, meaning peace upon you, and invoke the name of God (*Insya Allah*, meaning "God willing") as they express optimism for the success of a new policy initiative. Not too long ago, referring to the lack of coronavirus cases in Indonesia, the remarks of Indonesia's health minister were picked up by the international media. A caption on a *South China Morning Post* article read: "Indonesia's health minister says prayer has kept coronavirus away" (Cochrane 2020).

While such remarks may seem laughable from a Western standpoint, they reflect the day-to-day operations of a country that has in some ways remained socially conservative even as it has a young population very much in tune with modern developments. Of late, Islamisation of the Middle Eastern variant had deepened this conservative outlook. The growth in Islamic conservatism has manifested itself in concrete, visible consequences in a democratic system. Indonesian politicians increasingly utilise religious rhetoric, while political campaigns in some regions have become a test to prove which candidate is "more Islamic". In the 2019 presidential election, incumbent president Joko Widodo "Jokowi" decided to name conservative cleric Ma'ruf Amin as his running mate because of the need to shore up his Islamic credentials. Being perceived as insufficiently pious can be a serious handicap in contemporary Indonesian politics, especially as Islamic organisations possess one of the most reliable voter turn-out machines in the country.

This edited volume argues that the rise of Islamic conservatism poses significant challenges to Indonesia's continued existence as a multi-religious state, with far-reaching implications for the social, cultural and political fortunes of the country. As long-time Indonesian watchers, we are concerned that Islamic conservatism is pushing the country away from an inclusive orientation toward an exclusionary one. Religious intolerance is on the rise as demonstrated in multiple cases of protest against church construction in Islamic neighbourhoods, the abuse of blasphemy laws to punish minority groups, the retreat of middle-class Muslims into Islamic residential housing in exclusive gated compounds, and vigilante-style persecution (such as threats, verbal harassment and physical intimidation). The slightest criticism against Islam is already impossible in Indonesia. Human Rights Watch website reported in 2018 that Fiera Lovita, a doctor in West Sumatera, fled with her family to Jakarta after she was threatened and insulted by members of the Islamic Defenders Front for criticising its leader (Harsono 2018). In North Sumatera, a Buddhist woman's complaint to her neighbour in 2018 that the local mosque's call to prayer was too loud led to an angry mob burning down 14 Buddhist temples and her imprisonment on blasphemy charges.

There is also an ongoing struggle to delineate the boundaries of religion and to exclude those who do not conform to the religious identity that has already been set down. For instance, Muslims from the dominant Sunni sect are increasingly persecuting minority Muslim groups such as Ahmadis and Shiites, who are seen as heretical. The state has been largely silent. Such developments have begun to encroach on the formal rights of citizens to run for political office, with conservative Islamic groups arguing that non-Muslims cannot run for elected office because it would be improper for a non-Muslim to govern a Muslim-majority society.

It is worthwhile to pay close attention to the Islamic organisations that are at the epicentre of Indonesia's conservative turn, including the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia), NU Garis Lurus, the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, Gerakan Nasional

Pengawal Fatwa-Ulama and others. Islamic political parties such as Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS, the Prosperous Justice Party), and the prominent role they played in the conservative turn are equally important. We examine this ecosystem of Islamic organisations in greater detail in the respective chapters.

This volume discusses Islamic conservatism in terms of its intersection with identity politics and the way in which religious identity has been leveraged by conservative Islamic groups to attack their enemies and influence the direction of state policy. Often, this is done in the open through the use of democratic means, such as the right to freely associate and demonstrate. The most obvious example is the mobilisation effort – known as Aksi Bela Islam (ABI, Defending Islam Movement) – led by a coalition of conservative groups to turn out hundreds of thousands of Muslim supporters in demonstrations against Ahok in the run-up to the 2017 Jakarta election. This event will be discussed at length in the book.

This volume is also expected to contribute a model of analysis in the field of Indonesian and Islamic studies on the logic of Islamic conservative activism, which so far has only been understood on a superficial level by many scholars – for instance by those who portray them merely as tools used in an oligarchic power struggle in Indonesian politics, with no power or agency to shape their own destiny (e.g. Hadiz 2016). Scholars have failed to adequately take into account the ideological motivations of Islamist activists and organisations and their agency in bargaining and negotiating with national and regional-level political actors to ensure their agenda is being adapted (e.g. regional *Shari'ah* regulations, prohibition against Ahmadi and Shi'a minorities, etc.). This volume presents several case studies that highlight these factors in a fair and balanced perspective.

Another goal of this work is to broaden the concept of Islamic conservatism. Often, this is held to be synonymous with "political Islam" – attempts by hardline groups to impose some form of Islamic law on the state or to convert the state into an explicitly Islamic organ. While some conservative Islamic groups do hold that as their primary goal, it is a narrow reading of Islamic conservatism. The contributors in this volume explore the interaction between the Indonesian state and Islamic conservatism in a more nuanced manner, giving due weight to the fact that Indonesia is a socially conservative, Muslim-majority country. Therefore, the relationship between conservative Islam and the state is more complex than simply an attempt by radical groups to take over the government and convert it into an Islamic state – conservative Islamic groups often do represent opinions or positions that are broadly popular in Indonesian society. The contributions in this volume will help to give this complex dynamic the detail and nuance it deserves.

One of the novel contributions of this volume is that it provides an on-the-ground perspective on these issues from people who live it every day. The contributors are Islamic scholars from Indonesia, most of whom have first-hand experience studying these organisations in great depth. To our

knowledge, with exception of van Bruinessen (2013b), there is no existing English-language work about Islamic conservatism in Indonesia featuring analysis entirely sourced from local Indonesian experts. The authors engage with mainstream Islamic organisations such as MUI and Muhammadiyah, but also with lesser-known actors such as NU Garis Lurus (NUGL). The scholarship is based on insights and expertise obtained via extensive fieldwork, often using first-hand interviews with leaders and activists from these organisations, including groups such as FPI, HTI and MMI that are understudied in mainstream scholarship due to their secrecy, their distrust of outside observers and, more generally, the lack of access.

This edited volume looks at Islamic conservatism as a combination of normative and practical issues derived from Islamic texts that promote literal and exclusive compliance towards *Shari'ah* (Islamic moral ethics, and the adaptation of a more literal understanding of Islam within Indonesia's political and legal structure). The opposite concept of Islamic conservatism is Islamic modernism or liberalism, which promotes a contextual and inclusive interpretation of Islam (Kurzman 2002).

The term conservative is not a permanent categorisation, however. As a label, the term conservative can apply to many different Muslims organisations that seek to exclude others, monopolise the truth and judge the beliefs of other groups. Today, such Islamic organisations are labelled conservative, but this label is not static. This means that Islamic conservatism is not *sunnatullah*, not given, but is part of an evolving process between religion, society, politics and the state.

Prior to the presence of MMI, FPI and FUI, the label conservative was often given to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) due to the organisation's exclusive understanding of Islam (*madhabism*) and its political support for the conservative regime of Sukarno (Geertz 1976; Noer 1973). Now, Nahdlatul Ulama is considered more moderate, while the label conservative is applied to Islamic organisations like MMI, FPI, FUI, HTI and others. From this we can see that the term conservatism is a fluid one and its meaning and application can change over time and in response to evolving cultural or political circumstances. One of the overarching goals of this edited volume is to situate the contemporary conservative turn in Indonesian Islam within the broader political and social currents that are driving it, and to underline the fact that this is a dynamic and not a static process. To that end, the following section will analyse the concept of "conservatism" in Indonesia from a historical perspective, especially how it has changed over time and in response to democratic reforms.

## Conservatism in the Indonesian context

Conservatism was not a mainstay of political or religious discourse in Indonesia in its early years as a developing nation-state. This is because in the first half of the 20th century, as Indonesian intellectuals were struggling to create an independent nation-state and define a post-colonial trajectory, there was

no clearly defined liberal vs conservative divide – the tension was mostly between those advocating socialism, nationalism or a stronger role for Islamic identity and the extent to which these strains would be embodied in the apparatus of the state. Following independence, Indonesia's founding fathers were mainly concerned with whether to adopt a theocratic or nationalist-secular state. There were proponents on both sides, and ultimately the ideology of Pancasila was reached as a form of compromise (Darmaputera 1988; Intan 2006; Ramage 2005). The Pancasila acknowledged the supremacy of God, but also that Indonesia was a unitary state committed to social justice, and a state that recognised the legitimacy of non-Islamic religions.

The term conservatism began to enter scholarly debate during Suharto's authoritarian New Order, with Peter Christian Hauswedell's (1973) article in *Indonesia* titled "Sukarno: Radical or Conservative, Indonesian Politics 1965–64". Hauswedell applied concepts of radical and conservative leadership to Indonesia and argued that Sukarno was a radical leader. In looking back on Indonesia's 20th-century political trajectory, Bourchier & Hadiz (2003) would elaborate on this idea of political conservatism as being in opposition to progressive ideals. To them, the goal of conservative politics was to accumulate power, while the progressive stance was to use power and authority for the benefit of the people.

The concept of religious conservatism evolved along a separate path. It first came to prominence in *The Religion of Java*, where Clifford Geertz (1976) used the term conservative to differentiate between the characteristics of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. The word *kolot* was equated to conservatism and described the ideological and theological practices of Nahdlatul Ulama. The term *moderen*, in direct contrast to *kolot*, was used to describe Muhammadiyah. Geertz identified five main areas that differentiated *kolot* from *moderen* to underscore the differences between the two organisations.

First, *kolot* meant a belief in God determining your path in life, while *moderen* emphasised self-determination. Second, the *kolot* group believed in the all-encompassing role of religion in social life, while *moderen* drew clear distinctions between religious and secular affairs. Third, the *kolot* group was more tolerant of non-Islamic rites, while the *moderen* group assumed the purity of Islam as their main concern. Fourth, *kolot* prioritised "consummatory aspects of religion" and "religious experience", while *moderen* focused on "the instrumental aspect of religion." Fifth, the *kolot* group respected customary law (*adat*) and classical books of Islam (*kitab kuning*), while the *moderen* group referred mainly to the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* (Geertz 1976: 149–150).

Geertz's framing of religious conservatism became very influential in subsequent decades. Daniel S. Lev, for instance, used the categorisation to refer to NU as an Islamic conservative group or *santri kolot*, in opposition to more modernist reform groups such as Masyumi (Lev 2009). Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy (1986) also built on Geertz's concept of conservative vs modern to develop more complete and nuanced categories of Islam in Indonesia,

which also accounted for organisational growth and change over time. In the process, some Muslim organisations which would have been labelled conservative by Geertz no longer conformed to that categorisation. The obvious example is Nahdlatul Ulama, which is now considered a traditionalist or even neo-modernist Islamic organisation as its stance towards fundamental issues of theology had changed over time.

During the New Order, Suharto recognised the potential subversive power of Islam and was careful to keep religious organisations like MUI separate from affairs of the state. Radical organisations and beliefs were firmly repressed. With the democratic opening in 1998, religion became more explicitly linked with politics and public discourse. It was during this time that Robert Hefner (2000) published his ideas on Indonesia's brand of civil Islam – a moderate, tolerant and inclusive brand of Islam rooted in Indonesia's long-held values of civic discourse and association. Illustrating how Islamic organisations and the application of the term conservatism can change over time, Hefner labelled NU as one of the leading proponents of civil Islam.

However, this idea of civil Islam is beginning to go out of vogue in mainstream scholarship as attention has become drawn towards the rise of conservative or hard-line groups that are well adapted to competition in a free and open marketplace of ideas (Arifianto 2020). As Indonesia is generally a socially conservative society, the conservative ideas championed by Islamic organisations are finding a receptive audience and translating into conservative legislation which can lead to the increased persecution of minority Islamic sects or non-Islamic groups.

Martin van Bruinessen has characterised these developments a conservative turn:

> The term "conservative" refers to the various current phenomena that reject modernist, liberal or progressive re-interpretations of Islamic teachings and adhere to established doctrines and social order of Islam. Conservatives notably object to the idea of gender equality and challenges to established authority, as well as to modern hermeneutical approaches to scripture. There are conservatives among traditionalist as well as reformist Muslims (i.e., in Nahdlatul Ulama as well as Muhammadiyah), just as there are liberals and progressives in both camps.
>
> (van Bruinessen 2013a.: 16)

The conservative turn reflects the shifting face of Indonesian Islam from a more liberal, tolerant and open-minded discourse in Islam toward a more intolerant, extreme understanding of Islam and the desire for Muslims to live under Islamic law. This broad definition of conservatism, predicated on the virulent rejection of other interpretations of Islamic doctrine as *bi'da* (human innovation) and a fundamentalist interpretation of the correct method (*manhaj*) to practise Islam is the main reason for the increasing incompatibility between Islamic conservatism and the needs of a multi-religious society.

## Islamic organisations and democratisation

Islamic organisations with political links have a long history in Indonesia. For instance, Muhammadiyah was founded in 1912 and Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926. Syarikat Islam (the Islamic Trade Organisation) was also one of the original Islamic organisations was founded in 1905. These early Islamic organisations were explicitly political vehicles – mainly engaged in the political struggle to form an independent nation-state. However, during the long period of the New Order, Islamic organisations were suppressed and kept separate from politics.

A political role for Islamic organisations in public life returned in the democratisation of the post-Suharto era. Many Islamic organisations have returned to a more openly political role in public life, such as that played by Syarikat Islam or NU in the early 20th century. These Islamic organisations had become more influential in society and politics, coinciding with the increased use of divisive identity politics and rising conservatism.

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) that was founded in 1975 is an example of an *ulama* organisation that was founded with support from Suharto, a state Islamic vehicle designed to promote Pancasila as the state ideology and buttress support for the regime. That said, other commentators had said that the organisation could have been biding its time as it waited for the opportunity to advocate for the supremacy of Islamic belief in the legal and political spheres of Indonesia (Hasyim 2016; Ichwan 2005; Mudzhar 1993).

In fact, even as MUI officially embraced Pancasila, it issued exclusionary religious rulings (*fatwas*) on the so-called deviant sects of Islam (*aliran sesat*) (Hasyim 2016; MUI n.d.). Although *fatwas* were not legally enforceable, MUI's religious conservatism in terms of its strict and intolerant interpretation of Islam was also apparent. In the post-reform era, MUI has bared its fangs and began to more openly embrace political Islam. It has issued subsequent *fatwas* to provide theological legitimacy to actions carried out by hard-line and vigilante-style organisations like FPI, HTI, FUI and others.

The end of the New Order has created space for many conservative Islamic organisations to openly promote their views in public and compete against more moderate theological strains. These ideas have found a receptive audience. Even the mainline Islamic organisations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama or Muhammadiyah, have not been immune to these views, with conservative wings that seek to internally change the organisation's direction. In NU this phenomenon is most apparent in the way a small but vocal group called NU Garis Lurus (literally meaning "Straight Path NU") has been trying to take the current NU leadership to task for its weak commitment to Islamic ideals.

Democratic principles have paradoxically created opportunities for hard-liners and conservative Islamic groups to use the freedoms guaranteed under a democratic system to push conservative ideals and agendas, including the implementation of *Shari'ah*. In Jeremy Menchik's (2014) book, the fluid, even

chimerical nature of state and religion in Indonesia has been termed "godly nationalism". He argued that Indonesia's majority Muslim population has fused nationalism with the exclusion of heterodox religious groups. A sharpened sense of Islam is not just a phenomenon driven by extremist or radical groups, rather it is part of Indonesian nationalism. Menchik (2016) has also written on the intersection of democracy and rising religious intolerance in Indonesia, arguing that Indonesian Islam is tolerant to a degree but not in the liberal democratic sense. Organisations like NU and Muhammadiyah embrace a type of communal tolerance, but not one predicated on legal or civil rights for individuals, which may seem inimical to liberal democratic ideals but makes sense from the perspective of Indonesian Muslims.

The preceding discussion is meant to highlight two main ideas, which will reappear throughout the edited volume. One, the meaning of conservatism had changed over time and in response to changing social, cultural and political conditions. Two, an understanding of conservatism in Indonesia must be based on how Western ideas like liberalism and democracy are modified and localised to the Indonesian context. Only then can we begin to make sense of apparent contradictions, such as how a strong commitment to democracy in Indonesia can co-exist with rising intolerance.

## Structure of this volume

This volume is organised into the following chapters.

Burhanuddin Muhtadi and Rizka Halida (chapter 2) show how certain socio-psychological factors are supporting the rise of Islamist radical groups in Indonesia. Using survey data and statistical analysis, they employ social movement theory to demonstrate the importance of relative deprivation and religious identity in driving Islamic conservatism. Interestingly, they find that economic and educational variables are not significant, thus privileging the role of socio-psychological rather than socio-economic factors. When Muslims in Indonesia feel that they are economically and politically deprived, they are significantly more likely to self-identify along religious lines rather than national and ethnic ones. The authors find strong evidence that social identity and economic-political grievances are driving Indonesian Muslims to identify with or support conservative Islamic groups.

Dadi Darmadi (chapter 3) examines the impact of Islamic orthodoxy at regional level. Darmadi discusses the rise of Islamic conservatism by looking at how mainstream groups have monopolised the definition of Indonesian Islam at regional level. The study is based on fieldwork in Medan, East Java, Lombok and Kalimantan and suggests that mainstream Muslim groups are increasingly invoking religious orthodoxy to create an "Other", that the true enemies of Islam in Indonesia are communists, Ahmadiyyah, Shi'a and the Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL, Liberal Islam Network). Paradoxically, the majority Muslim religion has been used as an ideological device to create a narrative in which the Sunni majority is being challenged and threatened by

minority groups, and the chapter examines how this narrative is being deployed in the context of Islamic conservatism.

Irman Lanti, Akim, and Windy Dermawan (chapter 4) is an in-depth study of growing Islamic conservatism in West Java province – an Indonesian province where this phenomenon is clearly visible within the past three decades. Using a rich historical approach, the authors find that the Islamic landscape of West Java is not that much different from that of Central and East Java, which is based on Islamic traditionalism. The differences in the socio-political outlook between West Java and other major provinces in Java are due to a divergent historical trajectory, which sets it apart from the pattern developed in the others. First, the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion of the 1950s/1960s left a big scar among numerous Islamic clerics and schools in West Java, which were accused by the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) of harbouring sympathies toward the rebellion. Second, unlike in East and Central Java, Nahdlatul Ulama does not play a major role in mediating Islamic affairs in the province and, with notable exceptions, has a much smaller organisational presence compared to more conservative Islamic organisations. Together, these two developments contributed to the slow but steady wave of Islamic conservatism in West Java province over the past three decades, which becomes more visible when numerous regions in the province adopted *shari'ah* regulations after the 1998 *Reformasi* and 2001 decentralisation granted by the national government to the regions.

Ahmad Najib Burhani (chapter 5) elaborates on Muhammadiyah's position on three controversial issues that occurred after the anti-Ahok rallies known as the Action of Defending Islam (Aksi Bela Islam), the banning of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia as a religious organisation, recurrent controversies related to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on Penghayat Kepercayaan (Believers of Faith). Burhani argued that despite accusations of conservatism, Muhammadiyah has remained true to its raison d'être as a social movement guided by the theology of *al-Ma'un* (kindness). The chapter discusses Muhammadiyah's distinctive characteristic as an Islamic organisation, particularly its position as a provider of social services. It also looks at the impact of new cultural and political perspectives in the organisation, such as *dakwah kultura*l, *tafsir tematik*, inclusive relations with minorities, and *darul 'ahdi wa al-syahadah*, ultimately striving to give a balanced view of Muhammadiyah as it currently exists and how it has adapted to changes in Indonesian society.

Asep Iqbal (chapter 6) discusses the emergence of a conservative faction within Nahdlatul Ulama that has challenged the current leadership. This group is called NU Garis Lurus (the Straight Path NU). The chapter explores NU Garis Lurus' use of social media and its website to promote conservative beliefs and to reach new followers. According to NU Garis Lurus, the current leaders of NU have strayed from the original teachings of the organisation's founders. The mission of NU Garis Lurus, as implied by its name, is to return Nahdlatul Ulama to its original path – Khittah NU 1926. The chapter concludes that

observers need to keep a lookout for NU Garis Lurus as their growing popularity and online presence has been formidable and influential.

Syafiq Hasyim (chapter 7) examines the role of MUI's discursive output in the context of the Defending Islam movement. This chapter explores the role of MUI in providing an Islamic legal foundation and opinion for convicting Ahok of blasphemy. Hasyim digs into the history of MUI's discursive output – both *fatwas* and less authoritative *tawsiyya* – to show that this ruling should not have been completely unexpected. MUI has a history of issuing conservative *fatwas* in blasphemy cases and has long been opposed to non-Muslim leaders in Indonesia. The chapter also discussed links between the Defending Islam movement and MUI, as the movement used the organisation's opinion as theological justification for mounting a public campaign against Ahok. MUI leader Ma'ruf Amin eventually tried to distance himself from the movement as it grew, and the interlinkages between the two groups are discussed in the chapter.

Masdar Hilmy (chapter 8) looks at the rise and fall of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). The organisation became prominent during the Defending Islam movement and then was unilaterally disbanded by the Jokowi administration through the use of an executive decree, Perppu No. 2/2017 on the Amendment of Act No. 17/2013 on Mass Organisations (Organisasi Massa, Ormas). This decree, later ratified as law, gives the state broad authority to determine if a mass organisation is propagating ideology contrary to the principles of *Pancasila*. If the state determines this to be the case, the organisation can be banned. Hilmy believes that even though the ban dissolves all HTI activities, it will not be able to exterminate the ideology of *khilafah* (transnational caliphate) adopted by the organisation. This is because the existence of any ideology is created by opportunity structures. As long as social problems such as poverty, injustice, social dislocation, political oppression and the like are there, the ideology of *khilafah* is likely to resurface in some form or another.

Iqbal S. Ahnaf (chapter 9) traces the path travelled by MMI, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, as it sought to take advantage of Indonesia's decentralisation policies to pass *Shari'ah*-based laws and regulations passed in various local districts. The group has charted a delicate course between trying to influence the legal architecture of Indonesia through formal means and still maintaining ties with more radical and violent extremist groups. Despite some limited success in implementing *Shari'ah*-based laws in certain districts, MMI began to experience diminishing returns in its legalistic efforts. When its popular and charismatic leader, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, left the organisation, MMI began to fall into decline as internal factions warred with one another and membership declined. The chapter suggests that MMI's participation in the Defending Islam movement was an attempt to maintain support for the conservative Islamist movement.

Yon Mahmudi (chapter 10) demonstrates how the conservative Islamic party PKS is trying to navigate between traditionalist and revivalist factions

within the organisation, as a new set of leaders have embraced a more traditionalist and moderate stance than previously. Yet the ideological debates within the party are less divisive than those related to political strategy – whether to be antagonistic towards Jokowi or accommodative in the hope of receiving some benefits and state patronage. This has created tension within the party, particularly with those still loyal to the previous leadership and party elders who have been frozen out by the traditionalists. Mahmudi shows that even though PKS is often seen from the outside as a staunchly conservative Islamic political organisation, there are degrees and variations within its internal dynamics that paint a more complex picture about where the party truly stands.

Peripheral Islamic movements are also playing an important, if less visible, role in Indonesia's conservative turn, and they are the subject of the chapter by Andar Nubowo (chapter 11). The author looks at the case study of Wahdah Islamiyah, which is based in South Sulawesi. The analysis is framed within a historical perspective, explaining how Wahdah Islamiyah – which is generally considered a Salafi-oriented organisation outside mainstream Islamic organisations like NU and Muhammadiyah – came to develop their support bases in South Sulawesi, and how their development has shaped ideas around Muslim identity in those regions. He argues that after it broke away from Muhammadiyah in the mid-1980s, the organisation was able to grow rapidly by combining puritanist Salafi-influenced ideology with pragmatic approaches in socio-economic development and local politics. This enabled Wahdah Islamiyah to become the largest and most influential Islamic organisation in South Sulawesi in just two decades.

Najib Kailani (chapter 12) makes the argument that Islamic conservatism, rather than being in opposition to Western values such as free markets, is actually complementary to them and this in turn is driving the emergence of "market Islam". This chapter discusses the rise of Islamic self-help books and motivational seminars that encourage middle-class Muslims to embrace their faith while also embracing traditional capitalist values such as consumption and wealth accumulation. This chapter underlines the fact that Islamic conservatism does not always mean increased intolerance or the desire for an Islamic state; it can also be used to encourage middle-class Muslims to pursue increased prosperity and materialism.

The volume concludes with an epilogue chapter (chapter 13) by the editors, who reflect on the growing influence of Islamic conservatism and how it might impact Indonesia's democratic progress. The authors explore the relationship between the rise of Islamic conservatism and the future trajectory of Indonesian democracy, probing the question of whether Islamic conservatism can go hand in hand with democratisation or not. They advance the argument that Islamic conservatism can have a positive impact on the process of democratisation in Indonesia as long as the political and institutional structures are suitably flexible. The main question is whether the existing structures can balance and accommodate increasing social conservatism without giving

in entirely to violent extremism, intolerant groups and destructive ideologies that challenge the secular, inclusive nationalism that has been the feature of the Indonesian nation-state since 1945. The chapter concludes with some final thoughts on the possible future direction of Indonesian Islam as it struggles to locate a sustainable equilibrium within Indonesian society and Indonesian democracy.

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# 2 Muslim identity and deprivation

## Socio-psychological sources of support for Islamist radical groups in Indonesia

*Burhanuddin Muhtadi and Rizka Halida*

### Introduction

Much has been written about the rise of Islamist groups in Indonesia and religiously inspired radical-militant Muslim movements, particularly in the aftermath of the fall of the Suharto authoritarian regime in May 1998 (e.g. Jamhari & Jahroni 2004; Salim 2004; Hasan 2005; Muhtadi 2009). However, surprisingly, the question of what types of individual are vulnerable to such Islamist movements remains largely unexplored. Equally, much of scholarly works on this topic are largely based on qualitative approaches. Although they have greatly contributed to increasing our understanding of Islamism, this qualitative literature is not able to assess how many Muslims actually support Islamist hard-line groups in Indonesia, and what kinds of individual are most likely to lean towards such groups.

Using extensive empirical data drawn from a series of nationwide surveys conducted by our polling institute, the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) from 2006 to 2017, we can establish the extent to which radical groups gain public support over time from Indonesia's Muslim population. In the next analytical step, in order to closely investigate the core of the conservative Muslim constituency, we analysed a national survey that were commissioned by the Wahid Institute and conducted by LSI in October 2017.[1] LSI sticks to the standard methodology of surveying all Indonesians over the age of 17. Multistage random sampling was used to produce a sample that enabled us to make inferences and generalisations about the national population. For the purpose of this study, although the data included citizens of all religions, the analysis is focused on Muslim respondents.

Our findings show that, contrary to prior expectations, socio-economic factors (i.e. individual differences in levels of income and education and profession) have little correlation with support for Islamist radical groups in Indonesia. Instead, among the broad conceptual frameworks examined in this study, the most consistent and significant factor affecting the support for radical movements was socio-psychological explanations (i.e. a greater sense of Muslim identity and feelings of deprivation). The results are in line with the expectations from a socio-psychologically based theory, the social identity

model of collective action, that emphasises the role of social identity[2] in facilitating collective action.

We found strong evidence that when Muslims strongly identify with their religion as a primary identity (relative to their national or ethnic identities), they are more likely to perceive that their religious group is being treated unjustly, which in turn predicts the probability of respondents supporting Islamist radical groups in Indonesia. Islamists tend to acknowledge the breadth of the wealth gap that divide them with other members of religious groups and share the belief of Muslims being excluded from political life. Our study suggests that how Islamists perceive and frame such grievances drives their empathy and solidarity with their membership group, and that they then express their resentment through support for Islamist radical groups.

We organise the rest of the paper into four analytical sections. The first section reviews the conceptual framework in understanding level of support for Islamist groups. The second section assesses the size of the constituency of Islamist core supporters and their typical characteristics. The third section focuses on the analysis of the individual-level determinants of support for radical groups. The final part of this article then turns in more detail to the interplay between Muslim identity and deprivation as the most striking aspects of radical leaning constituency in Indonesia.

## Literature review

### *Islamist social movement organisations*

There has been an emerging interest in the literature to bring Islamist activism into the realm of collective action or social movement theories (e.g. Wiktorowicz 2004; Salim 2004; Muhtadi 2008). The integration of Islamism within collective action theory requires Islamists to operationalise their agenda through a social movement organisation (SMO). An SMO can be defined as an organisation or group that undertakes the collective pursuit of social change (Armstrong & Bartley 2007: 44,481).

Previous studies of social movement have shown the importance of SMOs in realizing the political objectives. SMOs organise people, resources and ideas to bring about change in society in the direction in line with their ideologies (McCarthy & Zald 1977). If Islamism is considered as a social movement and radicalism as a form of collective action, we cannot ignore the role of Islamist radical organisations behaving like SMOs in spreading Islamist ideas in Indonesia. Like most SMOs, such radical groups mobilise participants, resources and networks, and also produce clear summations of their belief and ideology that resonate with their target audience.

According to the steps of social movement theorised by Klandermans (1984), the first step in the process of radicalisation is to get public support or sympathy for Islamist groups' religio-political orientations, including support

for the implementation of their Islamist ideals in the polity. To do so, Islamist groups actively direct their agenda at the recruitment of people that have the potential to be mobilised. Klandermans (1997) called this process *consensus and action mobilisation* whereby the support, or the erosion of support, for participation is influenced by attitudinal and behavioural aspects. The consensus mobilisation is "the process through which a social movement organisation tries to obtain support for its viewpoint" (Klandermans 1997: 7). While the consensus mobilisation refers to the so-called struggle for the minds or the ideological support of individuals, the action mobilisation implies a struggle for individuals' willingness to provide resources such as money, time, skills or expertise.

Who are likely to be supporters of Islamist radical groups? In an attempt to identify the core of the conservative Muslim constituency in Indonesia, we derive valuable insights from the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) that integrates three dominant socio-psychological perspectives (i.e. perceived injustice, efficacy and identity) in explaining collective action (Van Zomeren et al. 2008). Before discussing SIMCA, let us take a brief look at the definition of collective action. It can be defined as action(s) carried out in the name of the group, aimed at improving the group's conditions (Wright et al. 1990). Collective action can take traditional forms (e.g. giving donation to radical groups) or non-traditional forms, such as joining in mass demonstrations, conducting "sweeps" and attacking other religious places of worship (Muluk et al. 2012). The above definition also requires all members of the group to self-identify as followers of an Islamist radical group and support the collective action.

### *Social identity model of collective action*

As noted above, we use the framework of SIMCA to explain support for Islamist groups in Indonesia. According to the SIMCA approach, three socio-psychological factors were integrated to explain the support for any movement, namely perceived injustice, identity and efficacy (Van Zomeren et al. 2008). Social identity is at the heart of the explanation. Social identity is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1974: 69). This definition stresses the importance of social group for individuals, namely as part of their self-concepts, and as a consequence, individuals will strive for and benefit from positive social identities. Anything perceived as a threat to individuals' social identity will motivate them to claim their positive identity. Especially in the case of disadvantaged groups, social identity fuels them to fight for a higher group status through collective action. Social identity predicts support for collective action not only directly but also indirectly through perceived injustice and efficacy. Hence, social identity assumes the role as an underlying factor of the relationship between injustice

and efficacy with social movement. Social identity bridges the perceived injustice and efficacy variables to explain collective action.

The second predictor is perceived injustice. The concept originated from the theory of relative deprivation (Gurr 1970; Pettigrew 2015). Relative deprivation is defined as "a judgment that one or one's ingroup is disadvantaged compared to a relevant referent and that this judgment invokes feelings of anger, resentment, entitlement" (Pettigrew 2015: 12). The definition, first of all, puts an emphasis on the judgment. It means that relative deprivation is more of a subjective evaluation than an objective condition. It follows the shift from the traditional assumption about collective action as consequences of objective inequality to consequences of subjective experience (Van Zomeren et al. 2008). Moreover, relative deprivation is based on intergroup comparison made by individuals as group members, which underlines it as an intergroup behaviour rather than a personal issue and makes social identity more salient than personal identity (Van Zomeren & Spears 2009). Lastly, relative deprivation includes the consequence of the judgement that takes the form of group members' affective experience as it invokes anger, resentment, and entitlement. It operationalises the term "tension", as coined by Gurr (1970), as an inherent part of relative deprivation. These features of relative deprivation make it a powerful motivator to explain the support for collective action.

The last predictor in SIMCA is perceived efficacy. Drawing from the concept of self-efficacy, perceived efficacy in the mode of inquiry developed by social movement or collective action theory refers to the collective belief held by group members that problems of their group can be solved through collective efforts (Bandura 1995; Bandura 1997). That is to say, it is a sense of agency – a belief that the group is capable of carrying out attempts to bring about change in society. However, perceived efficacy in this context is a group-level efficacy that is constructed by individuals who identify with the group. This group-level efficacy highlights the importance of social identity as the basis for judging the ability of certain social category to lead to social change. Also included here is political efficacy (Van Zomeren et al. 2008), which basically has the same purpose as many collective actions –namely, to influence government policy.

Accordingly, we draw specific hypotheses from the framework of SIMCA outlined above; that is, Muslim identity, perceived injustice and efficacy predict support for Islamist radical organisations in Indonesia:

H1: Indonesian Muslims who have a stronger identity as a Muslim will exhibit higher support for Islamist radical groups;
H2: Indonesian Muslims who judge that Muslims are economically and politically deprived will be likely to support such radical organisations; and
H3: Indonesian Muslims who have high self-efficacy will be likely to lean towards radical organisations.

## The level of support for Islamist groups in Indonesia

### *The Islamist core: FPI, HTI, Laskar Jihad, DI/NII and their supporters*

Our first challenge is to clarify what exactly is meant by Islamist radical group. In this paper we follow the concise definition provided by Wiktorowicz (2004: 2), who describes an Islamist group as an organisation that can be utilised to address "the mobilisation of contention to support Muslim causes". Following Wiktorowicz, we prefer such a broad definition to accommodate:

> the variety of contention that frequently emerges under the banner of Islam, including propagation movements, terrorist groups, collective action rooted in Islamic symbols and identities, explicitly political movements that seek to establish an Islamic state and inward-looking groups that promote Islamic spirituality through collective efforts.
>
> (Wiktorowicz 2004: 2)

Hence, we define Islamism as the extent to which Islam is perceived as a set of specific norms, comprehensive and indicative of the superiority of Islam, that contain the blueprint of a social order. Islamists intend to replace the present social and political order with such norms based on a certain understanding of Islamic teachings. This may be carried out either peacefully or through violent actions that are determined by the value system of the actors.

Our study can therefore cover a variety of Islamist groups that run the gamut from violent to peaceful, from "democratic" to anti-democratic. It deals with mass support for four Islamist groups: Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Islamic Defenders' Front), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, Party of Liberation), Laskar Jihad (Jihad Troops) and Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia (DI/NII, Islamic State of Indonesia). Laskar Jihad and FPI represent Islamist movements that use violence to achieve their goals. The former was formally established in 2000 in response to sectarian violence in Maluku, North Maluku and Central Sulawesi, where clashes between Muslims and Christians erupted immediately after the collapse of the Suharto regime, but it has been now disbanded by its leaders (Sidel 2008). The latter is a religious vigilante group which has advocated for the implementation of Islamic laws, whose activists have frequently attacked so-called places of vice such as bars, massage parlours, discotheques and places of gambling and prostitution. The group is also notorious for its open attacks on ethnic Chinese and Christians and minority sects deemed un-Islamic, such as Ahmadiyyah and Shiah (Mietzner & Muhtadi 2018). Although HTI described itself as a non-violent organisation, the group does not repudiate the use of force and strongly opposes the notion of democracy and that of the nation-state (Muhtadi 2009; Muhtadi 2019). The last variable of interest of this study is DI/NII, which has

sought to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia since the end of the colonial era (Alamsyah & Hadiz 2017).

The reasons why we chose these four Islamist groups as our main dependent variables are largely because the data on support for such movements are available over time, as we show below. To measure the extent of support for these Islamist groups in society, our dependent measures asked Muslim respondents two items. They were first asked about their awareness of FPI, HTI, Laskar Jihad and DI/NII. Those who responded affirmatively were asked whether they endorsed its respective religio-political agenda. Figure 2.1 shows that in October 2017 FPI had successfully presented as the most popular and likeable radical group among conservative Muslims in Indonesia. In the October 2017 survey, 60.4 per cent of Muslim population said they knew FPI, and out of those, 35 per cent claimed they endorsed its Islamist agenda. In total, therefore, the support level for FPI reached 21.1 per cent. In the 2014 legislative election, there were around 164 million Muslim voters.[3] Hence, the 21.1 per cent would mean an estimated 34.9 million Muslims nationwide displayed radical leanings towards FPI in 2017. No other Islamist group

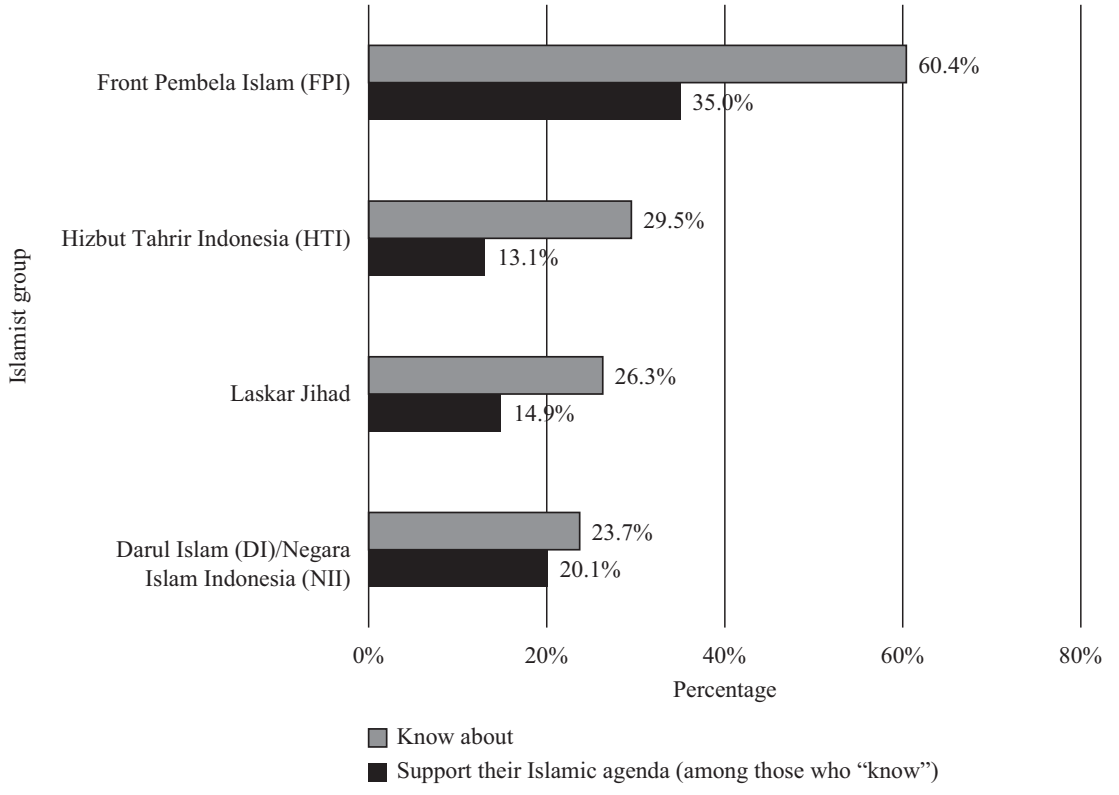


*Figure 2.1* Percentage of awareness and level of support for four Islamist groups
Note: Islamic Defender Front (FPI) was the most well known among Muslims, 60.4% of Muslim respondents reported that they knew the FPI and among them, 35% reported that they supported FPI. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) was second after FPI, which gathered 29.5% awareness and among them 13.1% supported HTI. After HTI came the Laskar Jihad with a 26.3% level of awareness and 14.9% support from those who knew of Laskar Jihad; and last was DI/NII with a 23.7% level of awareness and 20.1% support from them who knew DI/NII.

surveyed was capable of approaching FPI's awareness and popularity. Even HTI, which gained surging popularity after being banned by the government, was only known and supported by 3.9 per cent of the Muslim population.

Equally important, LSI's historical data allow us to assess the level of endorsement towards FPI among Muslims over time. While its popularity increased slightly from 54.4 per cent in 2006 to 60.4 per cent in 2017, the level of endorsement had stagnated over the period of time. It becomes more striking if we compare our March 2016 data set, eight months prior to the 2016 Islamist mobilisation[4] – which many scholars of Indonesian studies call "a turning point in the rise of Islamism" (Fealy 2016) or "an important shift in Indonesian politics" (Mietzner et al. 2018) – with the October 2017 survey: FPI even successfully increased its level of support among the total Muslim population from 15.6 to 21.1 per cent after the mobilisation. Despite facing harsh measures and charges against its leader M. Rizieq Shihab and his self-exiling, FPI surprisingly remained popular among conservative Muslims in Indonesia (Mietzner et al. 2018).

In order to provide a broader picture of the level of support for the four Islamist groups in October 2017, we also created an aggregate score from the answers to these questions, a score of between 66.68 and 100 (that is, if a respondent answered all or almost all questions in the affirmative) led to the classification as "pro-Islamist groups"; a score of between 33.34 to 66.67 indicated the categorisation "neutral", and of 0 to 33.33 "anti-Islamist groups". Note that those who "do not know/refuse to answer" are not included in the analysis. Based on these measures, 27.2 per cent of Indonesian Muslims in 2017 profess to support conservative and radical groups, 40 per cent neutral, and 32.8 per cent "anti-Islamist groups". Assuming that the population of adult Muslims reached 164 million people as recorded by KPU, the 27.2 per cent would mean an estimated 44.6 million Muslims nationwide publicly supported Islamist groups in 2017.

While this may appear significant in numerical terms, our multi-year data from 2006 to 2017 showed that conservative and radical sentiments in the overall Indonesian Muslim population has been declining since 2006 (Figure 2.2). This is in line with our previous work (Mietzner & Muhtadi 2018), which, drawing from the same historical data, concluded that the rates of intolerance (i.e. both political intolerance and religio-cultural intolerance) and radicalism (i.e. measured in an actual and hypothetical dimension of radicalism) were actually on the decline between 2010 and 2016. However, after some considerable declines in the core of the conservative Muslim constituency during that period, the data from 2016 and 2017 have shown an increasing trend once more. Compared to 2016, support for FPI, HTI, Laskar Jihad and DI/NII among Muslims increased by around five percentage points in 2017. In a separate paper (Mietzner et al. 2018), we have already argued that such a rise in radical sentiments can be ascribed to the influence of religio-political entrepreneurs during the Islamist mobilisation in November 2016 and beyond. As a result, instead of increased religious intolerance and

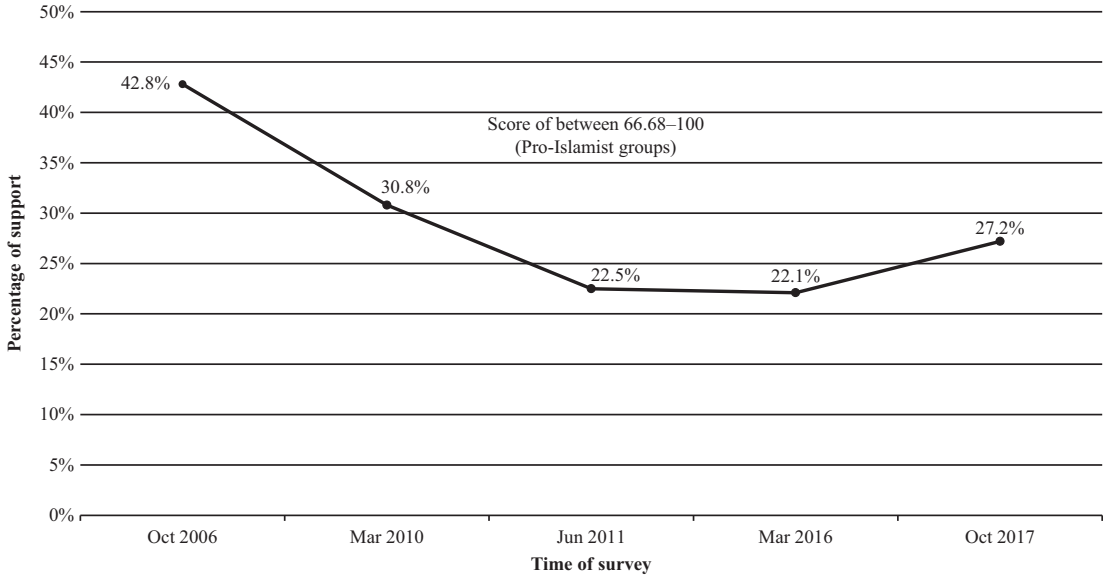


*Figure 2.2* Percentage of support among Muslims for Islamist groups over time (2006–2017)
Note: In October 2006 support for the Islamist groups was 42.8%, in March 2010 the trend was decreasing to 30.8%, 22.5% in June 2011, 22.1% in March 2016, and started to increase again to 27.2% in October 2017.

conservatism leading to the 2016 mobilisation, the reverse might be – that this mobilisation led to Muslims becoming more religiously conservative.

### *A profile of conservative Muslims in Indonesia*

What is the profile of typical supporters of radical groups? To answer this, let us turn to a demographic analysis of those displaying radical leanings towards Islamist organisations as a central focus of this study. In doing so, we ran a cross-tabulation on the classification scheme of the Muslim categorisation above (i.e. pro-, neutral, and anti-Islamist groups). In analysing the demographics of the Islamists' hard core, we focus on a particular segment of the Muslim respondents who supported Islamist religio-political agenda. They were predominantly Muslim Batak (40.8 per cent), Betawi (33.7 per cent) and Sunda (31.4 per cent) – exceeding, in all cases, these ethnicities' respective shares of the total Muslim population. The data from the cross tabulations also show that female Muslims were more likely to support Islamist groups than male Muslims.

In terms of the age category, the younger a Muslim, the more likely he or she is to endorse an Islamist political agenda. Rural Muslims were overrepresented in this segment of hard-core Muslims, while those who lived in urban areas were underrepresented. The levels of income and education do not make a difference; there is no significant difference in support for Islamist groups between individuals from different levels of income and education. In terms of region, those who resided in Sumatra were considerably stronger in this Islamist-leaning constituency than those who lived in Java, Kalimantan,

Sulawesi or other eastern parts of Indonesia. Finally, in terms of affiliation to the Islamic mass organisations, those who associated themselves with Muhammadiyah were more likely to support Islamist groups than those who identified with NU or other major Islamic organisations. It should be kept in mind that the relationships between the above demographic characteristics and support for Islamist groups may well be spurious. These relationships will be assessed further through bivariate and multivariate statistics.

## The determinants of support for Islamist radical groups

### *Dimensions and measures*

Having identified the typical characteristics of Islamists and established the extent of Muslims' support for Islamist groups as our main dependent variable of this study, we are now in a position to address broader questions in the comparative literature on Islamism – most notably regarding factors that explain why some Muslims are more likely to support such radical groups than others.

Before proceeding, we first introduce the independent variables used in this study. They involve three common indicators of SIMCA as the primary variables of interest of this study: Islamist deprivation, social identity and political efficacy. We also examine other attitudinal variables which might be relevant to support for hard-line groups, including the level of religiosity, affiliation to major Islamic organisations and support for the Islamist agenda, controlled by common predictors of people's behaviour such as gender, age, rural-urban domicile, ethnicity and levels of income and education.

First, the Islamist relative deprivation is an additive index based on responses to the battery of three questions: whether or not the respondents agree the beliefs that (1) Muslims are worse off economically than non-Muslims; (2) Muslims are treated unfairly by non-Muslims; and (3) In Indonesian political affairs, while non-Muslims make up only a tiny proportion of the electorate, they have greater influence than Muslims who constitute a majority of the population. Each of these items is a five-point scale, with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Since all three questions were negatively keyed, we recoded them with reversed Likert scales. The overall scores of measuring Islamist deprivation was drawn from initially reverse-scoring all three items and subsequently obtaining the average of all of those items. Then, the average score of the Islamist deprivation was categorised into three groups: a score of between 66.68 and 100 led to the classification as "those who exhibit greater levels of deprivation"; a score of between 33.34 to 66.67 indicated the categorisation "neutral", and of 0 to 33.33 "those who are not politically and economically deprived". Based on these measures, 14.8 per cent of Indonesian Muslims "support the idea of Islamist deprivation", 57.5 per cent "neutral", and 27.7 per cent "reject the notion about the Islamist deprivation".

Second, social identity is measured by whether respondents gave (1) "Muslim" or (2) Indonesia as their self-identity. This is based on the responses to one specific survey question: "What group do you mainly feel you belong to?" Among the Muslims surveyed, 28.4 per cent presented themselves as Muslim, 55.7 per cent said Indonesian citizen, 12.7 per cent indicated their particular ethnicity, and 3.2 per cent said "Do not know". In the analysis we constructed a dummy variable for Islamic identity, whereby respondents who identified as Muslim were coded 1 and those giving other identities coded 0. For Indonesian identity we also recoded into two: identifying mainly as Indonesian (1) and others (0).

The last variable of SIMCA is political efficacy, measured by two items (Reef & Knoke 1999): (1) People like me cannot influence decisions by political leaders; and (2) In Indonesia, people have the power to influence government policy. Each of these items is a five-point scale, with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". To create consistency among the items, we recoded the first item with reversed Likert scales. The responses to these items are then averaged to establish an "efficacy index". For the purposes of frequency interpretation, the average score is categorised into three scales: a score of between 0 and 33.33 indicated "low self-efficacy", a score of between 33.34 and 66.67 meant "medium self-efficacy," and of 66.68 and 100 "high self-efficacy."

A further attitudinal variable that potentially correlates with support for Islamist groups is the extent to which respondents agree Islamist agenda. To measure this, we asked about their opinions on two items: cutting thief's hand off and stoning to death in cases of adultery, varying from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). Given the nature of the two questions were negatively keyed, we recoded them with reversed scales. Similarly, the answers to these questions are then averaged and are categorised into three scales: a score of between 0 and 33.33 indicated "anti-Islamist agenda", a score of between 33.34 and 66.67 pointed to "neutral", and of 66.68 and 100 "pro-Islamist agenda." Based on this classification scheme, 26.6 per cent of Muslims in 2017 were in favour of endorsing the Islamist agenda (i.e. thieves must be punished by amputation of a hand, and adulterers should be stoned to death), while 25.3 per cent neutral and 48.1 per cent rejected such radical Islamist agenda.

Much of the literature on Islamism is also closely related to religious piety (Mujani 2003). Accordingly, we examine whether the intensity of religious ritual practices carried out by the respondents affect their support for hardliners. In this study, the level of religiosity is a composite of five items looking at respondents' performance in relation to the daily five prayers, Ramadan fasting, suggested prayers (*shalat sunnah*) and congregational prayers other than Friday prayers, and the recitation of Qur'anic verses. Each item has a scale of 1–4: 1 = very often, 2 = quite often, 3 = rarely, and 4 = never. The overall scores of the religiosity level were produced by initially reverse-scoring all five items and subsequently adding them together to form a religiosity level index. Its average score was then categorised into three groups: more pious, not too pious and less pious.

In addition we examine whether the socio-religious affiliation of the respondents predicts their support for radical Islamist organisations. The question was: "In our society there are a number of religious social organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, etc. Do you feel part of NU, Muhammadiyah or another Islamic organisation, or you do not feel part of any Islamic organisation?" Of those who associated with Islamic organisations in Indonesia, the largest proportion, 41.4 per cent, were affiliated with NU. Only 5.6 per cent identified themselves with Muhammadiyah. Thus, almost half of Muslims felt close to the two largest Islamic organisations. Meanwhile, those who felt a degree of attachment to other Islamic organisations were found to be insignificant. Forty-seven per cent of respondents did not feel part of any Islamic organisation, and 2.6 per cent did not know or did not answer.

In terms of demographic variables, we first control for the respondents' gender to capture any possible relationship between gender and support for Islamist groups. Gender is coded 1 if the respondent is a male; 0 if the respondent is a female. We also control the age of respondents to identify any bias in the level of support for religio-political Islamist agenda represented by hardliners with respect to the age category. Age is a continuous variable that reports the respondent's age in years, ranging from the youngest to the oldest. In addition, our dataset used a single 12-point scale item to measure an individual's income level. This measure asked: "As a monthly average, how much is the gross income of your household?" Income is a continuous variable that reports the respondent's gross household income per month, coded on a scale from 1 to 12, where 1 indicates that the respondent's income per month is under IDR 200,000 and 12 indicates it is over IDR 4,000,000. We recoded this scale into two categories, where 1 indicates that the respondent's income per month is equal to or over IDR 1.2 million, while 0 is below IDR 1.2 million. With respect to education, we asked respondents about the highest level of education they had completed. Education is coded 1–10, where 1 indicates that the respondent never attended school and 10 indicates that the respondent held a bachelor's or higher degree. For our analysis, we recoded this scale into two categories, where 1 indicates that the respondent's education attainment is senior high school or above, while 0 indicates those who had education below senior high school. Another demographic variable that potentially correlate with support for radicalism is ethnic identity. Ethnicity is divided into two categories only: Javanese was coded as 1, others were coded 0. The last demographic variable is rural-urban residence, using a dummy variable that indicates whether respondents live in a rural area (coded 1) or an urban area (coded 0).

## Results and discussion

We now turn to discuss the multiple regression results with respect to the individual-level determinants of being supportive of Islamist groups in Indonesia. As discussed above, we examine three socio-psychological perspectives

of collective action that include a religio-political sense of deprivation, subjective sense of identification with religious identity and efficacy as important ingredients of Islamist mobilisation. In addition, we also test whether the level of religiosity, support for an Islamist agenda and a sense of affiliation to Islamic mass organisations significantly predict support for radical organisations, controlling socio-demographic variables. The results indicated that those predictors explained 11.2 per cent of the variance ($R^2$ = .112, $F$(14, 799) = 7.19, $p$ = .00).

Before further discussion, support for radical groups as the primary dependent variable of this study requires additional elaboration. In this study, the support for radical groups is treated as a proxy for Islamist collective action. Hence, prior to proceeding multivariate analysis, we need to examine whether or not support for such groups correlates positively with Islamist radical acts. In our October 2017 dataset, we developed a radicalism index[5] that measured Islamist radical acts by using four items: (1) donating funds to any group that promotes Sharia even those with violent orientations; (2) demonstrating against people or groups who supposedly contradict Islamic values (Ahmadiya, Shia, etc.); (3) conducting unauthorised "sweeping" of venues not complying with Sharia law (gambling, prostitute locations, pubs/bars); and (4) participating in attacks on houses of worship belonging to other religions. Each of these items was asked in both an actual and a hypothetical dimension, i.e. if those Muslims surveyed said "never", they were asked whether they would do so if the opportunity arose. In our October 2017 survey we find a significant correlation between support for radical groups and Islamist radical behaviours ($r$ = .24, $p$ = .000), meaning that the greater a Muslim's level of support for Islamist groups, the more likely he or she is to participate in radical acts such as carrying out morality "sweeps" on sinful establishments, attacking other faiths' places of worship, demonstrating against people or groups accused of being un-Islamic and so on.

The correlation results allow us to further examine the determinants of such engagement through multivariate analysis. Using linear regression analysis, Table 2.1 allows us to assess the role of the social identity hypothesis and other attitudinal and socio-demographic variables to explain the likelihood that a Muslim is supportive of Islamist groups. In general, the results provide statistical evidence for the SIMCA framework in explaining mass support for radicalism in Indonesia. Among three important variables normally advanced to support about SIMCA, both Islamist deprivation and Islamic identity stand out as strong predictors of Indonesian Muslims who were most likely to support radical Islamist groups. The multivariate analysis shows that the two important indicators of SIMCA are not spurious and remains significant and relatively stable regardless of other attitudinal variables, and demographic and socio-economic factors. The effect of Islamist deprivation is significant ($B$ =.14, $p$ =.046). Similarly, the original relationships between Muslim identity and support for radical groups remain unchanged when comparing the bivariate statistics with multivariate analyses.

*Table 2.1* Regression analysis for determinant variables predicting support for Islamist groups

| *Variable* | *B* | *SEB* | β | *t* | *p* | *95% CI* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 48.47 | 10.41 | | 4.66 | .000 | [28.04, 68.89] |
| Age | −.16 | .09 | −.06 | −1.77 | .078 | [−.34, .02] |
| Ethnicity (1 = Javanese, 0 = Non-Javanese) | −9.94 | 2.39 | −.15 | −4.15 | .000 | [−14.64, −5.25] |
| Gender (1 = Male, 0 = Female) | −6.35 | 2.30 | −.09 | −2.75 | .006 | [−10.87, −1.82] |
| Rural-urban (1 = Rural, 0 = Urban) | 4.08 | 2.44 | .06 | 1.67 | .095 | [−.71, 8.87] |
| Education attainment (1>= High School, 0 < High School) | −2.13 | 2.50 | −.03 | −.85 | .393 | [−7.04, 2.67] |
| Income (1 >= IDR 1,2 million, 0 < IDR 1,2 million) | −2.41 | 3.04 | −.03 | −.79 | .429 | [−8.37, 3.56] |
| Occupation (1 = White collar, 0 = Other) | −1.37 | 3.03 | −.02 | −.45 | .650 | [−7.32, 4.57] |
| Islamist deprivation | .14 | .07 | .07 | 2.00 | .046 | [.00, .27] |
| Muslim identity (1 = Moslem, 0 = Other) | 9.11 | 3.90 | .12 | 2.34 | .020 | [1.46, 16.76] |
| National identity (1 = Indonesia, 0 = Other) | 1.99 | 3.55 | .03 | .56 | .574 | [−4.97, 8.95] |
| Political efficacy | −.03 | .07 | −.01 | −.37 | .709 | [−.16, .11] |
| Level of religiosity | −.02 | .08 | −.01 | −.23 | .817 | [−.18, .14] |
| Support for Islamism agenda | .17 | .05 | .12 | 3.37 | .001 | [.07, .27] |
| Affiliation toward Mass Islamic organization | −1.71 | 2.34 | −.03 | −.73 | .465 | [−6.31, 2.88] |

Note: $R^2$ = .112 (N = 814, p < .001). CI = confidence interval for B.

The estimate is not only positive, but its effect reaches statistical significance at the 95 per cent level ($B = 9.11$, $p = .020$).

On the contrary, a greater sense of national identity has little to do with support for radical groups. Note that bivariate statistics indicate that an Indonesian identity of this sort has a negative and statistically significant association with the Islamist-leaning constituency. But this association becomes spurious once control variables are introduced.[6] Again, these results support the notion that SIMCA has predictive value in explaining sources of support for radicalism in Indonesia. The only variable of SIMCA that failed to predict the probability that respondents endorsed Islamist hardliners was political efficacy. We suspect that this might be the result of a measurement error, given that relative to other SIMCA variables which specifically pointed to Islam (i.e. belief that Muslims experienced political and economic exclusion and Islam as self-identity), the questions of political efficacy only dealt with a citizen's ability or inability to influence government decisions that had little to do with Islamist causes. Our measures referred to the sense of self-efficacy rather than what Mummendey et al. (1999) termed *group efficacy*, defined as the shared belief that one's group can resolve its grievances through a unified attempt. The result might be different if we used such group efficacy measures, pointing to a sense of Islamic collective power on the basis of which Muslims feel themselves capable of changing the circumstances and fate of their Islamic society (Drury & Reicher 2005).

Table 2.1 also presents the regression results with respect to other attitudinal variables of interests of this study. Support for core Islamist agenda, for instance, has a statistically significant and positive relationship with support for radical groups ($B = .17$, $p = .001$). Its substantive effect is very large. It is therefore safe to conclude that the more likely a Muslim is to support Islamist ideals, the more likely he or she is to be radicalised and engage with hard-line groups. In contrast, individuals' self-identification with mass Islamic organisations like NU and Muhammadiyah makes no difference to the probability of them being involved in Islamist groups. Bivariate statistics indicate that the coefficient of such affiliation to Islamic mass organisations like NU or Muhammadiyah is negative and significant, meaning that such self-identification reduces the probability of being supportive of Islamist radical groups (see Table 2.2). However, when controlled by other variables, the coefficient loses its statistical significance. Likewise, Muslims' level of religiosity is also no reliable predictor of such engagement. The regression analysis, as shown in Table 2.1, confirms the bivariate statistics that the substantive effect of the intensity of religious ritual practices is indeed statistically insignificant.

What about socio-demographic variables? Among seven socio-demographic variables controlled in the model, only two variables have a significant relationship support for radical organisations: ethnicity and gender (female). Table 2.1 clearly shows that being a non-Javanese Muslim (especially those who self-identified as Minang, Sundanese or Betawi, as will be further discussed below) predicts a greater probability that a respondent supported

Islamist groups, even after introducing other variables ($B = -9.94$, $p = .000$). Similarly, the multivariate analysis confirms the bivariate statistics that female Muslims were more likely to endorse Islamist religio-political ideals represented by hard-line organisations ($B = -6.35$, $p = .006$). With respect to age, the original relationship is that there is an apparently negative and significant association with radical support, meaning that the younger a Muslim is, the less resistant he or she is to such groups (see Table 2.2). However, the coefficient of age loses statistical significance in the traditional sense ($p < .05$), but it is still significant at the 90 per cent level. This finding contradicts the claims made by Hadiz and Rakhmani (2017a) who contend that Islamist mobilisation in Indonesia is largely supported by younger generations. Regarding the socio-geographical location, the bivariate model suggests a positive and significant relationship between those Muslims living in rural areas and radicalism (see Table 2.2). The effect of rural settings, however, disappears when controlled by other variables. This runs contrary to previous works, most notably Mujani (2003), who argued that Islamism is a rural phenomenon. Our survey results also contradict media reports in Indonesia that frequently claim that the rise of radicalism in Indonesia is closely associated with urban settings. Our finding demonstrates that Islamism appears entirely unrelated to urban or rural backgrounds.

More unexpectedly, socio-economic variables generally fail to predict the probability that Muslim respondents reported being Islamists. Table 2.1 above clearly demonstrates that individual differences in terms of levels of income and education cannot explain the likelihood that a respondent would be leaning toward a core Islamist constituency. The estimates of both income and education dimensions are negative as expected, meaning that the less educated and those with lower incomes tend to support Islamist radical groups, but the regression results are not statistically significant.[7] Similarly, the job category is not associated with radicalism either. These findings run counter to the rule of thumb among scholars, officials and journalistic observers, who often conclude that Islamists are more likely to be socio-economically vulnerable individuals. For instance, Rizvi Shihab, a member of Nahdlatul Ulama and a researcher at the Nation Building Foundation, asserts:

> Why has radicalism entered Indonesia so easily and attracted a following? Could it be due to a lapse in national security, social media disinformation, and insufficient rural education? These are all reasonable explanations, but they may overlook the basic root of the problem that has allowed these radical concepts to infiltrate Indonesia: poverty and the illusion of a growing national economy.
>
> (Shihab 2014: par. 3)

Vice President Jusuf Kalla also considered poverty and lack of education to be root causes of Islamic radicalism (*Antara* 2014), while some scholars have

suggested not only that radicalism is an expression of socio-economic grievances among underprivileged Muslims, but such resentment is "also held by a cross section of the young and educated middle class whose aspirations for upward social mobility have been dampened by actual circumstances they confront" (Hadiz & Rakhmani 2017a).[8] However, evidence from our national probability sample survey shows that none of these arguments are supported in the case of Indonesia. In fact, socio-psychological factors (i.e. deprivation and religious identity) are consistently and significantly linked to support for radical groups. Hence, the remainder of this paper focuses on the interaction between the two variables and how such socio-psychological factors become breeding grounds for Islamist mobilisation.

## Interplay between Muslim identity and collective deprivation

The findings outlined above clearly support empirical evidence for SIMCA, indicating that the more a Muslim has a strong sense of religious identity, the more likely it is that he or she makes the intergroup comparisons between the Islamic community and non-Muslims that lead to feelings of Islamist deprivation (Smith et al. 1994: 278). In this regard, such feelings of Islamist deprivation seem to be the result of self-identification with religious identity. This might explain why there is no statistical association between individuals' feelings of Islamist deprivation and their socio-economic profiles. Those who rate their religious identity as being more important than their national or ethnic identity tend to feel economically and politically deprived, regardless of whether they are more or less educated or whether they are the "haves" or the "have-nots".

Given the insignificance of socio-economic profiles, the finding raises a further question about what constitutes feelings of Islamist deprivation. If levels of income and education as well as profession are entirely unrelated to Islamist deprivation, what made such deprivation a crucial predictor? The finding supports earlier work on the significance of *cognitive* aspects – rather than *affective* experience of injustice – for explaining the components of such collective deprivation (Guimond & Dube-Simard 1983). The micro-analysis of cross tabulations on the demographics of those who are economically and politically deprived provides evidence for the cognitive interpretations of deprivation. The higher education a Muslim has, the more likely they are to feel excluded from economic and political life. They predominantly belong to the under-40 age group, which is generally assumed to be more educated than the older age group. In terms of ethnicity, compared to other groups, Betawi, Sunda and Minang were more likely to judge that Muslims are being marginalised in Indonesia.

Put differently, the economic-political grievances against a perceived unjust status quo are primarily caused by Muslims' stark knowledge of being less well off than other religious groups. Calculated from the 1995 Inter-Sensal Survey (SUPAS) data by controlling the share of income in each religious

group by the share of population of each group, Stewart (2013: 110) demonstrated that Muslim incomes were, on average, significantly behind those of all other religious groups except the small Hindu population. The ratio of income per capita to Muslim income was only 1, compared to Catholics (1.58), Protestants (1.50) and Buddhists (1.61). Using data from a 2014 survey on inequality perceptions conducted by LSI,[9] we also found huge income gaps, especially among Muslims, Confucians and Buddhists (Figure 2.3).[10] Indeed, a significant number of Christians, especially those in West and Central Kalimantan and eastern parts of Indonesia, can be categorised as poor and vulnerable.

The income divide is even more striking if the analysis is based on ethnic affiliation. The only ethnic group that can be 100 per cent classified as an emerging consumer class is Chinese Indonesians. At the other extreme of the spectrum, 64.8 per cent of Madurese can be categorised as poor or vulnerable. It becomes far more interesting when we look at educational achievement by religion (Figure 2.4). Almost two-thirds of Muslim adults have a limited level of education. This is in line with Suryadarma (2010), who found that Muslims, both male and female, had lower rates of education progression compared to their non-Muslim counterparts.

The Muslim disparity in income level and education attainment is amplified by the fact that Indonesia is ranked among countries with the most

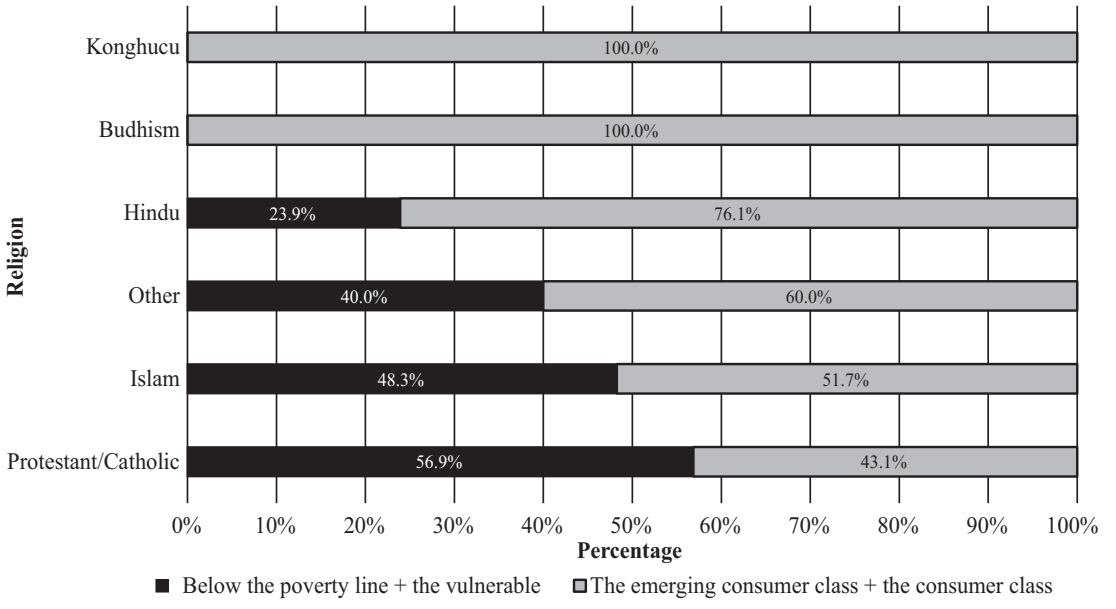


*Figure 2.3* Percentage of income groups by religion
Note: Among Muslim respondents, 48% belonged to group of income of below the poverty line or the vulnerable, while 51.7% were part of the emerging consumer class or consumer class. Among other minority religions, Protestant/Catholic were the lowest group in which 56.9% of their believers were part of below the poverty line group or the vulnerable group. Other minority religions were of the higher emerging or consumer class, with the Konghucu and Budhism being the highest.

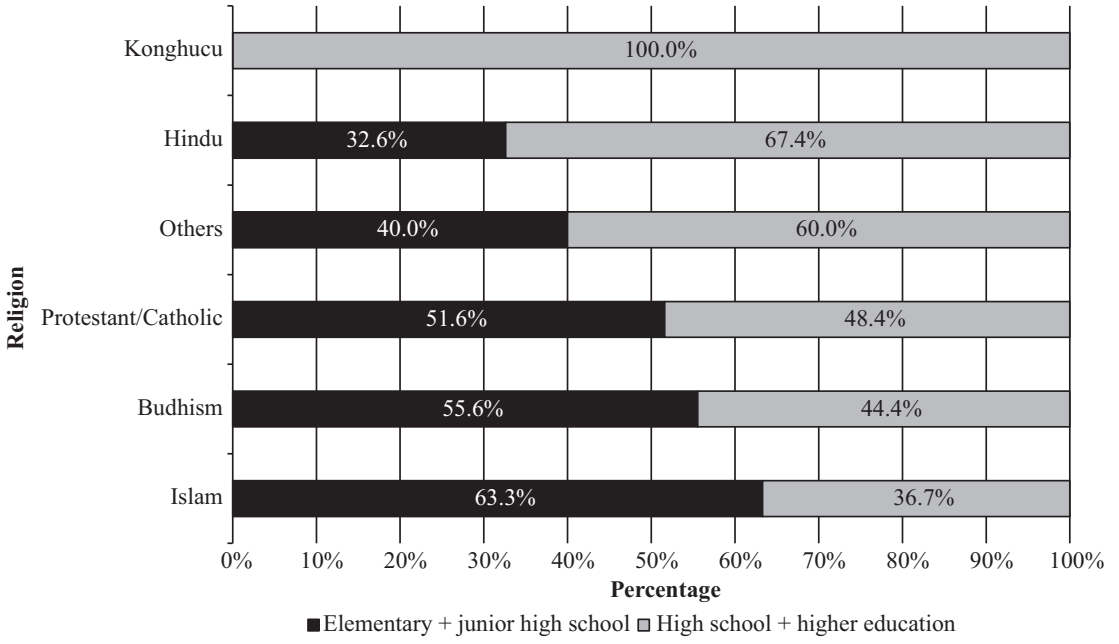


*Figure 2.4* Percentage of education attainment by religion
Note: Muslims respondents were the lowest categories, with only 36.7% having attended high school or higher education, while 63.3% had only attended elementary or junior high school.

unequal distribution of wealth in the world (Muhtadi et al. 2019; Muhtadi & Warburton 2020). The Credit Suisse Research Institute's 2016 Global Wealth Report stated that the wealthiest 1 per cent of Indonesia's population owned 49.3 per cent of national wealth (Allard & Da Costa 2017). Similarly, Oxfam found, shockingly, that Indonesia's top four conglomerates (combined) have more assets than the bottom 40 per cent of the country's population, equivalent to 100 million people (Oxfam 2018). Indeed, 44 out of Forbes' definitive list of the 50 richest people in Indonesia are of Chinese descent, even though the Chinese make up only 1.2 per cent of Indonesia's population (2010 Census).

Note that feelings of deprivation do not necessarily reflect an objective state of disadvantage – they can be the product of a subjective sense of injustice that has little to do with objective conditions. For instance, Islamist mass demonstrations against the former Jakarta governor in November 2016 increased Muslims' subjective sense of being excluded from polity. Using similar measures of deprivation and exactly the same methodology, surveys taken before and after the 2016 Islamist mobilisation showed a particular increase in the rates of perceived political discrimination by non-Muslims and sense of growing political influence of non-Muslims in Indonesia. In the pre-mobilisation survey in March/April 2016, only 8.1 per cent of Muslims agreed with the statement that Muslims in Indonesia were being treated unfairly by non-Muslims. This increased in October 2017 to 25.3 per cent. Likewise, the number who shared the belief that non-Muslims had a significant role to play in Indonesian politics, despite their minority status, rose from 13.1 per cent in

2016 to 19.9 per cent in 2017. The perception of an economic gap between Muslims and non-Muslims remained at the same level after the mobilisation. Overall, as shown in Figure 2.5, the rates of the combined three measures of being economically and politically deprived were on the rise by around eight percentage points, confirming our previous arguments regarding the ability of religio-political entrepreneurs to frame economic-political resentments in a way that legitimises and motivates their collective actions (Mietzner et al. 2018; Mietzner & Muhtadi 2019). This indicates their success in turning subjectively perceived threats by non-Muslims into an effective mobilisation, regardless of whether such sentiments are based on facts or simply a manifestation of stereotypical judgements.

It is worth noting, however, that such economic and political exclusion becomes more salient when a Muslim overwhelmingly embraces his/her religious identity over other forms of social identity, which in turn contributes to the "us versus them" mentality. Given that the sense of being a Muslim seems to be the driving factor behind perceptions of relative deprivation, the last part of this paper is intended to understand why – for some Muslims – their religious identity is more powerful than other identities. Schwedler (2001: 3) argues that Islamic ritual practices have a significant role to play in providing the foundation of an Islamic identity. These practices then lead to the emergence of a collective identity inspired by Islam which then transcends geographical boundaries.

Islamist groups typically use the concept of *ummah* (community of believers) embodied in the long history of Islam as a means of religious propaganda to make people feel aggrieved about collective problems attributed to the Muslim community across the world (Muhtadi 2008; Muhtadi 2009). They share a greater sense of Islamic unity and solidarity and view Muslims in different parts of the world within the framework of a global *ummah*. [11] In an interview with one of the authors, HTI's spokesperson Ismail Yusanto repeatedly mentioned the importance of the transnational Islamic state (caliphate) to address what he called global Muslim subjugation and suppression.[12] Such perceived Muslim pain and misery is often contrasted with Islam's glorious past. The invocation of an Islamic golden age is especially prevalent in the thinking of Muslims whose outlook is shaped by a deep reverence for history. Virtually everywhere in the contemporary Muslim world, Islamists have felt subordinate in relation to Western Christian civilisation. "The trauma of modern Islam," Daniel Pipes stated, "came about from this disparity between medieval successes and recent troubles", which lead to "a pervasive sense of debilitation and encroachment in the Islamic world today" (Pipes 2000: 87–93).

Finally, in the context of Indonesia's domestic politics, Islamic identity is framed as a form of "resistance" to define a problem for Indonesian Muslims in collective terms that necessitates a collective response. Accordingly, Islamist groups are typically concerned with the already strong sense of Indonesian Muslims being worse off than non-Muslims economically. In addition,

they pay greater attention to other collective discrepancies, which include the belief that non-Muslims occupy a disproportionate share of political positions. Such radical groups' tendencies to exploit Islamic identity match the exclusivist sentiments of individual Muslims. And indeed, as shown throughout this study, we find strong evidence that when religious identity becomes more significant, a Muslim increasingly notices collective injustice with regard to his/her religious group.

## Conclusion

This study attempted to find out how large the support is for Islamist groups in Indonesia and why some Muslims become radicalised and engage in such groups and others do not. We found that a significant number of Muslims expressed support for Islamist radical groups in Indonesia, represented in this study by four groups: FPI, HTI, Laskar Jihad and DI/NII. In total, our 2017 survey found that 27.2 per cent of Muslims in Indonesia displayed radical leanings. Of the four Islamist groups, FPI appeared to be the most popular among those at the centre of the conservative Muslim constituency in the country.

We have also shown that individual differences in profession and levels of income and education do not appear to contribute to explaining support for Islamist groups. The insignificance of these factors suggests that Islamism in Indonesia can best be explained in terms of socio-psychological perspectives (i.e. relative deprivation and religious identity) rather than socio-economic factors. According to the study, those at the core of the Islamist constituency in Indonesia tend to be economically and politically deprived and significantly more likely to self-identify as Muslim than Indonesian or according to their ethnicity. Indeed, we found strong statistical evidence of a causal link between those who identify more with their religious identity than with other forms of social identity and such economic-political grievances.

In sum, the data we collected support the social identity model of collective action, suggesting that the salience of people's identity as Muslim plays a significant role in revealing narratives of oppression with regard to their religious group. Put differently, those individuals who primarily present themselves as Muslim are more likely to pay attention to their perceived collective injustice and feel that their religious group is marginalised. Muslims whose religious identity is particularly strong tend to have the social perception that despite being a majority group they are generally treated as second-class citizens in terms of economic and civil rights compared to other social groups. In other words, the strong sense of belonging to a certain religious group collides with the perception of social realities around them (Postmes & Jetten 2006), who – despite their majority status in Indonesia – are perceived to receive less than they deserve and be treated less well than other groups.

## Notes

1 The LSI and Wahid survey took place 6–27 October 2017. The number of samples was 1,500 voting-age adults with a margin of error of ±2.6 per cent at 95 per cent confidence level. To make sure that the survey interview was actually carried out by the field researcher, we conducted spot checks as quality control. The spot checks were conducted randomly on 20 per cent of the total sample. In the quality control process, no significant error was found.
2 Following Van Zomeren et al. (2008: 505), the concept of social identity refers to "the socially shared understandings of what it means to be a group member, and this typically includes stereotypes of in- and out-groups in relation to each other as well as appreciations of the relative status of those groups".
3 See The Indonesian Electoral Commission (KPU), *Data Pemilih Tetap Pilpres*, available at https://data.kpu.go.id/ss8.php
4 For further description of the 2016 Islamist mobilisation, see Fealy (2016), "Bigger than Ahok: Explaining the 2 December Mass Rally", and Assyaukanie (2017), "Unholy Alliance: Ultra-conservatism and Political Pragmatism in Indonesia".
5 For further discussion about the radicalism index, see our earlier works, Mietzner and Muhtadi (2018); see also Mietzner et al. (2018) and Mietzner and Muhtadi (2019).
6 For more discussion on the bivariate results, see Table 2.2.
7 As can be seen in Table 2.2, the bivariate statistics actually shows that level of income has a significant impact on support for radicalism. However, the multivariate analysis clearly reveals that this conclusion is misleading.
8 The claim that radicalism is a middle-class, well-educated phenomenon is probably based on specific non-generalisable cases. Hadiz and Rakhmani's survey was probably taken from a non-probability sample of those Muslims who participated in the 2016 "Action to Defend Islam" rally against the ethnic Chinese Christian governor of Jakarta popularly known as Ahok.
9 The survey interviewed 3,080 respondents across Indonesia, who were selected by multistage random sampling, with an estimated margin of error of ± 1.8 per cent at 95 per cent confidence level.
10 The methodology of classifying income groups into four categories is based on the World Bank, who used the LSI dataset to provide a report on "A Perceived Divide: How Indonesians Perceive Inequality and What They Want Done about It" (2015). Based on this classification scheme, Poor = below poverty line; Vulnerable = between 1 and 1.5 * poverty line; Emerging Consumer Class = between 1.5 and 3.5 * poverty line; Consumer class = 3.5 * poverty line and above. The poverty lines used are based on the September 2013 National Socio-Economic Survey (Survei Sosio-Ekonomi National, Susenas).
11 This conclusion is based on interviews by one of the authors (Burhanuddin Muhtadi) with a number of key Islamist leaders such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Solo, 13 September 2002, and Abu Ridho, Jakarta, 12 December 2007.
12 Ismail Yusanto, Jakarta, Interview, 10 October 2002.

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## *Appendix*

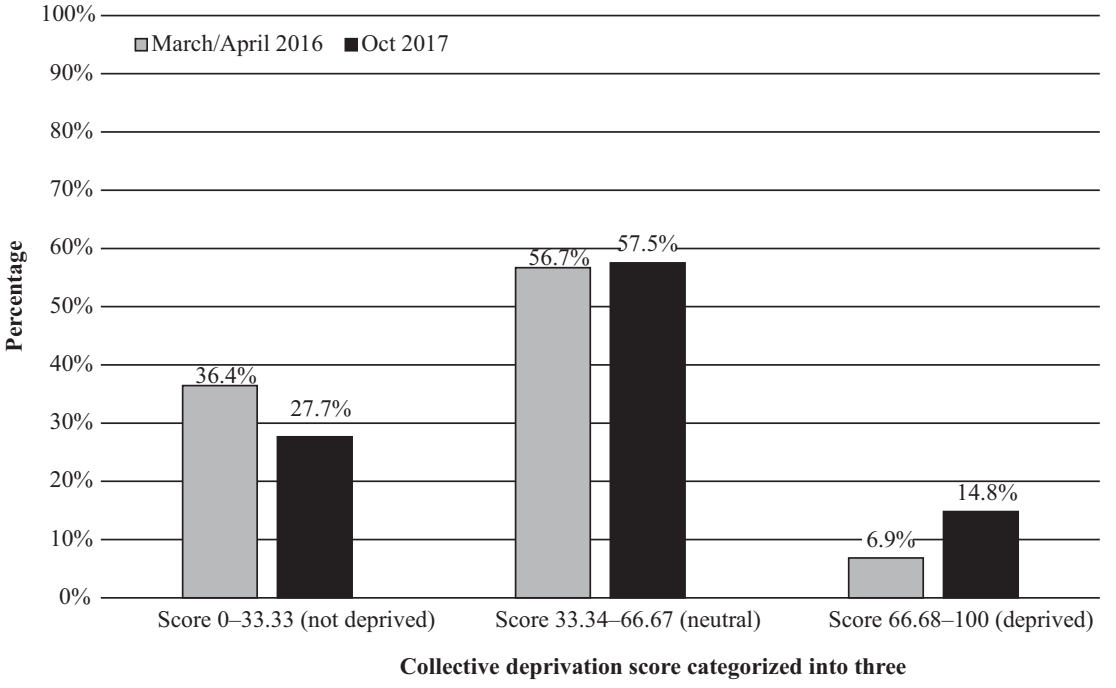


*Figure 2.5* Collective deprivation score of three items
Note: The collective deprivation increased 5.4 points from March/April 2016 ($M$ = 39.4, $SD$ = 14.95) to October 2017 ($M$ = 44.76, $SD$ = 16.79).

*Table 2.2* Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of support of Islamist organisations and predictor variables

| | *Variables* | *M* | *SD* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* | *9* | *10* | *11* | *12* | *13* | *14* | *15* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Support for Islamist organizations | 46.12 | 33.71 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Age | 43.21 | 13.75 | −.11** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Ethnicity | .44 | .50 | −.22** | .06* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Gender | .50 | .50 | −11** | .12** | −.01 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Rural-Urban | .50 | .50 | .12** | −.02 | −.09** | −.01 | -- | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Education | .41 | .49 | −.06 | −.24** | −.03 | .07** | −.25** | -- | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Income | .72 | .45 | −.07* | −.11** | .04 | .05 | −.28** | .26** | -- | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Occupation | .14 | .35 | −.04 | −.16** | .02 | .08** | −.17** | .37** | .19** | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Islamist deprivation | 44.77 | 16.79 | .17** | −.05* | −.18** | −.02 | .04 | .00 | −.04 | −.01 | -- | | | | | | |
| 10 | Muslim identity | .29 | .46 | .16** | −.05 | −.08** | −.12** | .04 | −.08** | −.04 | −.04 | −.09** | -- | | | | | |
| 11 | National identity | .58 | .49 | −.10** | .00 | .03 | .10** | −.05 | .12** | .04 | .07** | .00 | .00 | -- | | | | |
| 12 | Political efficacy | 49.35 | 14.95 | −.03 | −.04 | .02 | .02 | .02 | .07* | .03 | .03 | −.07** | .00 | .00 | -- | | | |
| 13 | Level of religiosity | 83.93 | 15.13 | −.02 | .10** | −.01 | .03 | −.07* | .10** | .05 | .07* | −.05 | .04 | −.01 | .03 | -- | | |
| 14 | Support for Islamist agenda | 44.36 | 23.31 | .22** | −.12** | −.17* | −.05 | .10** | −.04 | −.02 | .01 | .20** | .13** | −.09** | −.03 | −.03 | -- | |
| 15 | Affiliation toward Islam mass organization | .50 | .50 | −.07** | .03 | .23** | .04 | .06* | −.05 | −.01 | .00 | −.06* | .07* | −.10** | −.01 | .09** | −.10** | -- |

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01.

# 3 Islamic orthodoxy at the regional level in Indonesia

*Dadi Darmadi**

## Introduction

On a warm October afternoon in 2014, hundreds of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta students flocked to a public discussion held at a mosque within the campus 2 area. They came to listen to a lecture given by a popular speaker, which had an interesting title, "The Palu Arit from an Islamic Viewpoint".[1] *Palu arit* is an Indonesian term for a hammer and sickle, which is also the symbol of the now defunct Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The preacher was Ustadz Alfian Tanjung, a Jakarta-based and long-time Muslim public speaker, known for his bold comments on political and religious affairs.

At the gathering, Ustadz Alfian Tanjung talked about the condition of Islam in Indonesia, which in his view was deteriorating. He explained his reasons, focusing on five groups that he considered to be heretical and the main enemies of Islam in Indonesia. These were the PKI, the Ahmadi sect, the Shia, the Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute (LDII) and the Liberal Islamic Network (JIL).

This was not Alfian Tanjung's first visit to UIN Jakarta, known for being one of the more progressive-minded campuses among higher education Islamic institutions in Indonesia. In 2013, Alfian Tanjung attended a seminar at UIN Jakarta where he said that since the dissolution of the PKI in 1966, communism has never truly died in Indonesia and that the PKI is in the process of being revived.[2]

According to Alfian, the revival of the PKI was obvious. This was evident, he argued, from the many PKI support groups that have spread to various sectors targeting labourers, peasants, students, journalists, bureaucrats, members of the House of Representatives, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community organisations (CSOs), political parties, as well as activists and religious clerics.[3] He once said that the current government under President Jokowi is anti-Islamic in spirit because it has been infiltrated by PKI elements.

Alfian often identifies the rise of communism in Indonesia with the notion that Jokowi's tenure is anti-Islamic. He asserted that Jokowi had only used Islam for campaign purposes, in the hope of enhancing his image. Jokowi is

expressly against the notion of implementing Islamic *Shari'ah* in the country and shows he is antithetical to the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) by preventing funds and aid from reaching the organisation.[4] Alfian Tanjung was later reported to the court by politicians Nezar Patria and Teten Masduki because in his uploaded speech on YouTube he had referred to them as communist "minions", arguing that the presidential palace had been infiltrated by communist forces.

The rising popularity of hard-line Muslim speakers such as Alfian Tanjung who speak misleadingly about the rise of the PKI and the threat it supposedly poses to Islam in Indonesia is a worrying phenomenon. Its narrative popularity is now not just limited to mosques or discussion forums but has spread to campuses and schools and is often a focus of conversation between netizens on social media.

This chapter seeks to understand the underlying logic of this discourse. In particular, the goal is to understand how this anti-communist framing is linked to the increased insistence on orthodoxy by Muslim scholars and leaders. As this is a nation-wide phenomenon, this study will look at how religious orthodoxy is shaping the discourse based on our recent research in five cities across Indonesia: Medan, Pontianak, Jakarta, Surabaya and Mataram.

In addition, what is interesting is that despite inevitable differences, in Jakarta – i.e. at national level – relations between mainstream Islamic groups and minority groups are often quite smooth and amicable. This can be seen, for instance, in the attitudes and decisions of leaders of large organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) towards the Ahmadiyya group. Citing the official stance of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU) about the Ahmadiyya sect in Bogor, West Java, which was decided on 9–11 September 2005, the Ahmadiyya was depicted as "a heretical and un-Islamic sect for not recognizing the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet as stated expressly in the Qur'an, Sunnah and Ijma' Ulama [the consensus or agreement of Islamic scholarship]". However, according to the PBNU, "the community must not act anarchistically against activities carried out by Ahmadiyya groups. The prohibition of Ahmadiyah understanding and activities is entirely left to the government or law enforcement and not the authority of a person or group" (NU Online 2008). Thus, various collaborations and agreements occurred between the main Islamic mass organisations and other groups. However, what happens in Jakarta is not always the case in the regions. In areas such as Lombok Island, for example, the Ahmadis are often the targets of attack and persecution for various reasons. Our research indicates that there are a variety of factors that give rise to important and interesting dynamics in the relations between mainstream Islamic groups and Muslim minority groups.

## Literature review

The spread of radical Islamism within schools and universities gained momentum after Indonesia transitioned from the authoritarian New Order to

a democratised era in 1998. Recent surveys by the Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) and the Maarif Institute have suggested that certain schools and universities are seeding grounds for the growth and influence of Islamism and radicalism.[5] Student organisations are especially vulnerable to infiltration and readily susceptible to the rhetoric of bigotry and intolerance. A lack of understanding of Islamist and radical movements had weakened the public's ability to stand firm against such rhetoric (Maarif Institute 2017). The results of a recent study by PPIM at Jakarta State Islamic University showed many Islamic religious education (PAI) teachers at elementary and secondary school level tending to harbour exclusivist views and often intolerant of groups, both Islamic and non-Islamic, that were different from them (Darmadi 2016; see also Nasuhi et al. 2018).

Teachers play an important role in the transmission of knowledge, including religious knowledge, among students. Unfortunately, the level of intolerance and radicalism among Muslim teachers in Indonesia is quite high. A national survey conducted by PPIM in 2018 showed that as many as 63.07 per cent of teachers had intolerant opinions regarding adherents of other religions (Syafruddin et al. 2018). The findings parallel those of Jeremy Menchik, who argued that Islam in Indonesia is essentially anti-liberal and not one that conforms to Western, liberal-democratic definitions of the term (Menchik 2016).

This PPIM survey also supports the perception that Islamist views are gaining acceptance among teachers in Indonesia. The survey found that 82.77 per cent of teachers agreed that Islam was the only solution for overcoming all the problems of society. Of those surveyed, 62.22 per cent agreed that only a government system based on Islamic law would be best for the country, 75.98 per cent agreed that the government must enact Islamic law, while 79.72 per cent agreed that when electing leaders, Muslims must choose candidates who would fight for the application of Islamic law. Nearly a quarter, 23.42 per cent, of respondents agreed that the national ideology of Pancasila and the 1945 constitution was unacceptable because these had superseded God's right as supreme lawmaker. Finally, the survey found that 64.23 per cent of teachers agreed that a non-Muslim candidate should not be allowed to become president in Indonesia.[6]

In recent years, Indonesia's quest to promote interreligious harmony has been hampered by public narratives suggesting that Islam in Indonesia is under threat. Narratives of this kind can be found in the rhetoric of speakers like Ustadz Alfian Tanjung. Even so, they are not a new phenomenon. There are anti-Shia references dating back to the late 1970s, supported by local leaders such as KH Irfan Zidni and other Saudi-trained scholars and activists (Zulkifli 2009). Historically, anti-Shia sentiment had been used by hard-line Islamist groups in Indonesia to strengthen religious solidarity (Formichi 2014).

Likewise, anti-Ahmadi sentiment has been around since at least the beginning of the 20th century, when Haji Rasul from West Sumatra campaigned to

discredit Indian Ahmadi missionaries arriving in Java in the 1920s (Burhani 2013). The movement was the first sign of a rupture between the Ahmadi and other Muslim organisations, especially Muhammadiyah (Beck 2005).

Like the anti-Shia movement, the anti-Ahmadi movement is an attempt to increase solidarity among Sunni Muslims worldwide. The anti-Ahmadi fatwa issued in Mecca in the late 1970s had created a globalised discourse of exclusion around the Ahmadi group and has often been used as a theological basis for intolerance over the years (Darmadi 2013; see also Ropi 2010). In his study of anti-Ahmadi movements among Muslim groups in the past, Jeremy Menchik coined the term "Godly nationalism" for the "we-feeling" shared by insider groups that tend to exclude minority groups such as the Ahmadi (Menchik 2014).

This has been used to build a narrative that Sunni Islam as practised by the majority of Indonesians is under attack from deviant groups and sects. This narrative is frequently presented at Muslim gatherings in local mosques and offices, as well as in campuses like UIN Jakarta. Some Muslim clerics and preachers, such as Ustadz Alfian Tanjung, Abdul Somad and Felix Siauw, have become famous from pushing such narratives through online *da'wah* activities on social media.[7]

Following recent scholarship on the rise of progressive as well as conservative Islamic groups in Indonesia, this research seeks to explore the religious and social conditions at regional level that are driving this phenomenon. The impact of domestic as well as economic and socio-political conditions on these Islamic movements will also be examined (Arifianto 2012).

## Mainstream Muslim groups

My research focuses on recent changes within the religious landscape of Indonesia, which I assume will have a major impact on the development of Islam not only in Indonesia but also in Southeast Asia. I investigate the stories, narratives and recent experiences of Indonesian Muslims to show how narratives, prejudices and stereotypes have been used to vilify, discredit and malign an entire Muslim population – and to define what it means to be a Muslim in Indonesia today.

Some of these Muslim public speakers – and their social media messages at large – nurture and perpetuate the notion that the enemies of Islam in Indonesia, particularly communists, Ahmadiyya, Shia and JIL members, are bent on dominating Indonesia's political sphere. This narrative is framed in such a way as to argue that these groups are actively destroying the Islamic way of life – which is where our discussion of Islamic orthodoxy comes in. Is this fact or myth? This study seeks to examine and question these assumptions and trace these narratives.

Between August and October 2017, with a research team from UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, field research was conducted to understand how orthodoxy is understood, interpreted and disseminated by Islamic groups in

Medan, Pontianak, Jakarta, Surabaya and Mataram. Our research findings showed that there has been an increased effort by mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia to define Islamic orthodoxy. This recent reformulation of orthodoxy is considered a strategic move to defend the Islamic religion from ideological threats. For example, in an attempt to defend their definition of Islam, mainstream Muslim groups join movements and rallies that target minority groups and deviant sects (Zulkifli 2014). The emergence of substantial support in various regions towards the Defend Islam Movement *(Aksi Bela Islam)* is a clear part of this trend.

Identity politics took off following Indonesia's democratisation (Salim 2007), but in the post-Suharto era, conservative forms of Islam have increasingly taken root among Indonesian Muslims (van Bruinessen 2013). Our research revealed that the opinions and actions of some mainstream Islamic groups and state responses to the question of the Ahmadis and Shiites have transformed Indonesia's public understanding of religion, which includes the birth of new social and orthodox religious formations as well as mobilisation campaigns by mainstream Islamic groups. We argue that, in recent years, Islamic orthodoxy has been developed and strengthened by several factors, including the narrative that Islam in Indonesia is in danger. These factors have helped define public understandings of Islam while such narratives gained wider acceptance in Indonesian society.

Defenders of Islamic orthodoxy came about historically because of the need to defend a certain perspective or interpretation over others (Azra 2012). Orthodoxy, as defined by us in this study, is a particular set of religious understandings and practices that strengthens the legitimacy of the ruling group – in politics and religion – in the eyes of the people. This study analyses the way in which Islamic orthodoxy is understood in various regions of Indonesia and how this understanding shaped exclusivist narratives.

In his study of the "gerakan sempalan" or splinter movements – perhaps one of the most captivating studies of Islamic orthodoxy in the New Order era – Martin van Bruinessen referred to Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia with authoritative ulama bodies such as MUI in particular, then the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Assembly, the Syuriah NU and others (van Bruinessen 2013). For him, the term "splinter movement" is indeed commonly used, normatively, for religious sects that the ulama's institutions consider heretical and dangerous.

## Reformulating Islamic orthodoxy

This study addresses the recent reformulation of Islamic orthodoxy by examining increasing hostile sentiments against outsider groups from trends, patterns and a propensity towards a militant attitude among the Sunni majority population in Indonesia. In this study, we consider the Ahmadis and Shiites as the largest and most visible outsider groups in Indonesia. By "orthodoxy" we mean "a way of following or conforming to the traditional and generally

accepted rules or beliefs of a religion", but also one that is formulated over time – and possibly reformulated today (Ahmed 2016, 2017).[8]

In 2008, anthropologist Leo R. Chavez (2008) wrote a compelling book, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens and the Nation.* Through a careful analysis of media spectacle and public discourse, Chavez interrogates and challenges the Latino threat narrative – the idea that Latinos are incapable of integration and are taking over and changing America. Chavez offers us a thoughtful analysis of conflicts over the meaning of citizenship in an increasingly globalised world (see Chavez 2008). For this chapter I draw on some of his ideas to show how Muslim minorities and non-Muslims have been socially constructed as a threat to Indonesian Muslim communities by Muslim public speakers for their own cynical purposes and interests, and how these threat narratives are formulated and reformulated with specific agendas.

Our research seeks to understand religious social formation, the emergence of new orthodoxy models and their impact on minority rights. We study current mobilisation and campaign models used by mainstream Islamist groups in five cities – Medan, Jakarta (Jabodetabek), Pontianak, Surabaya and Mataram. In each city, we conducted in-depth interviews with senior figures (four persons), young activists (four persons) and members of groups/organisations who are against the Ahmadi sect, Shiism and liberal Islam (four persons). In addition, we conducted interviews with the groups they are targeting, the Ahmadis, Shias and liberal Islam members (if available, two persons from each group in each city). In total, we interviewed up to 18 people in each city.

Using methods drawn from anthropology and media studies, this study aims to explore the trends and patterns of orthodoxy formation in Sunni Islam and the rise of anti-Ahmadi, anti-Shiite and anti-Islamic liberal movements in everyday practice and in the context of minority-majority group relations in Indonesia. We hypothesise that, in an effort to defend the orthodoxy of their religion, many mainstream Islamist groups in Indonesia have united against minority groups and formed anti-Ahmadi, anti-Shia and anti-liberal Islamic movements.

In order to investigate the efforts of these groups to maintain and defend religious orthodoxy, our research focuses on how mainstream Islamic groups perceive the following: (1) willingness to participate in religious violence against minority groups; (2) anti-minority attitudes; (3) organisational support for rejection of minority groups; (4) support for religious violence against unwanted groups. We seek to understand the degree to which these groups threaten the sanctity of "Islam".

## Orthodoxy at the regional level

Research carried out in five cities in Indonesia found that, in an effort to defend Islamic orthodoxy, there has been rising religious intolerance, mainly

in the form of attitudes and actions aimed at preventing or opposing the fulfilment of citizenship rights guaranteed by the constitution in the name of religion.

The study also revealed the potential for religious-social radicalism, including the participation and willingness to participate in actions and movements that might lead to violence which sharpen religious differences. And finally, the research showed that there are a number of ideological factors related to the potential of radicalism and religious intolerance, and these are often embedded in religious teachings.

In recent years there has been a pattern of Muslim groups that claim to represent the majority of the Muslim population. Their emergence has often led to horizontal conflicts because they are hostile to groups they consider deviant. These groups have grown in numbers and spread to various regions in Indonesia, as seen in the Aksi Bela Islam 212 protests carried out in 2016 (Darmadi 2017).

In North Sumatra, West Kalimantan and Lombok, a number of Muslim public figures have lamented that Indonesia is under threat because of the danger of religious liberalism. This discourse is especially pervasive on the internet and social media. An example is the writing of a young Muslim blogger named Syamsudin Kadir (Kadir 2011). Following in the footsteps of Hartono Ahmad Jaiz, who wrote *Bahaya Islam Liberal* (The Dangers of Liberal Islam) in 2002 (Jaiz 2002), Syamsudin Kadir often implies that liberal groups such as *Jaringan Islam Liberal* or *Jaringan Islam Nusantara* threaten the future of Indonesia, and his influence is especially pernicious amongst the younger generations. Kadir frames his ideas as a dispute between *ahlul haq* (those who hold the truth) and *ahlul batil* (those who are bound by mischief and error) that will never end. The believers will always be hostile to the infidels, the monotheists will be hostile to the *kafir* (non-believer) ruler, the *Sunnah* (Teachings of the Prophet) will be hostile to the *ahlul bi'dah*. This includes hostility between Muslims and the *munafiq* (hypocrite) community – that is, liberal Islamic groups. In Medan, a number of Muslim groups have held religious gatherings criticising the government and the police for allegedly criminalising the *ulama* (preachers).

A number of Muslim activists interviewed in Medan expressed their belief that JIL is a dangerous organisation. The group was referred to as "the minions of the West seeking to undermine Islam", mainly because of their embrace of scientific principles that undermined religious teachings. Interviewees considered enemies of Islam to be those associated with non-Muslims and JIL or those who are liberal in outlook.[9]

In Lombok, the Ahmadis are likewise considered a threat by mainstream Muslim groups because they hold the belief that there is a prophet other than Muhammad and have their own scriptures. They are also perceived as heretics created by the enemies of Islam to destroy the religion from within.[10] Although in the past relations between the various groups were fairly good, the local politics of Lombok in the *Reformasi* era has created tension among

them. In October 1998 there were attacks on Ahmadi group houses in East Lombok. As a result, 41 Ahmadiyah followers had to flee. Then, in June 2001 there were attacks on Ahmadiyah settlements in Sambielen, Bayan, North Lombok, resulting in a death, a serious injury, and 39 people evacuated to a safe place.

The problem continues to grow because Ahmadiyya has gained a significant following in areas traditionally the heart of Islamic orthodoxy in Lombok and the base of a local Islamic organisation called Nahdlatul Wathan. The presence of Ahmadis in Lombok is often likened to a "thorn in the flesh" of mainstream Islamic groups.

In East Java, Shia Islam is considered dangerous due to doctrinal teachings related to the Companions, marriage, the inducement of bodily harm and other issues.[11] In Surabaya, East Java, there was in general a relatively modest wave of rejection of minority groups by the mainstream group. All matters relating to differences of understanding in religion are usually left to the MUI and GUIB (*Gerakan Umat Islam Bersatu* or United Muslim Movement). Thus, anti-Ahmadiyah and anti-Shia attitudes are not so visible at the level of Surabaya society in general. GUIB as the collective basis of the Islamic movement consists of 75 Islamic organisations in East Java, including NU, Muhammadiyah, Hidayatullah, DDII, HMI, PMII, PII, Al Irsyad, ICMI, PERSIS, Muslimat NU, Muhammadiyah Youth, SI, Madura Ulama Alliance (AUMA), DMI, FUI, Muslimah Hidayatullah, Syabab Hidayatullah, IPNU, Al-Haramain Association, Majlis Dawah Indonesia and many others. One of the main objectives of GUIB is to avoid street demonstrations or mass protest on the streets, which disturb public safety. The formation of GUIB means there is no longer a need to take to the streets as these Islamic organisations can be asked to find a meeting point for any problem that arises. From there it will be submitted to a regional government forum so that the local government can provide solutions or issue laws, such as Surat Keputusan Gubernur no. 188/94 / KPTS / 013/2011 concerning Ahmadiyah and Pergub no. 55 of 2012 concerning Heresy and Shia.

However, exceptions occur in some Islamic organisations, such as the FPI, Hidayatullah and the Islamic Da'wah Council (DDI). They often speak out loudly in their rejection of Ahmadiyah and Shi'a. Elsewhere, anti-Ahmadiyah and Shi'ite attitudes are not so blatant. Large organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Al-Haramain tend to follow the MUI and Perda (local regulation) decisions.

It is important to understand that in East Java in general and Surabaya in particular, ulema (MUI) and the government have a very close relationship – it can even be referred to as "inside government". This means that religious issues, in this case those involving Ahmadiyah and Shia, can be quickly anticipated and overcome. Preliminary findings of our ethnographic research in Jakarta, Medan and Pontianak revealed how the threat narrative has been used to portray groups such as Shias, Ahmadis, JIL members and alleged communists as existential threats to Islamic solidarity (Darmadi 2017).

In Pontianak, however, the threat narrative is relatively insignificant as the groups involved are mainly the FPI (Front Pembela Islam) and MUI. Demonstrations are chiefly organised to protest against the existence of the Ahmadis, but not the Shia. Attacks are launched by pronouncements such as the MUI fatwas. NU, Muhammadiyah and the Yayasan Mujahidin (Mujahidin Foundation) are involved in this process.[12] In West Kalimantan, it seems that pre-existing religious understandings can determine mainstream Islamic attitudes. Evidently, any movement tends to be in defence of an Islamic orthodoxy that is deeply rooted in the society. An example of this might be the demonstrations at the Mujahidin Mosque, the pride of West Kalimantan Muslims, which has stood majestically in the centre of Pontianak City since 1978. However, the expulsion of ex-Gafatar members in Mempawah and the past conflict with the Dayak tribe in West Kalimantan can also be seen a form of defence of attitudes and views about Islam that they feel are threatened, both ideologically and politically.

Volatile political struggles are prevalent in the provinces of Kalimantan. Political issues that stem from Jakarta very often have a domino effect on the provinces. Examples include a public campaign calling for the election of exclusively Muslim leaders through movements such as the Sajadah Fajar (literal meaning, "Dawn Prayer Rug"). In Pontianak, such a stand is problematic because regional leaders such as the governor, who is Dayak and Christian, may not get along with Muslims. Initially the FPI had issues with the Dayaks. However, as the majority of Muslims supported the FPI, the group became embedded within the Muslim society of West Kalimantan (Darmadi 2017).

In Medan, North Sumatra, such religious movements have adopted less religious-sounding names: Aliansi Satu Cinta (One Love Alliance), Pejuang Subuh (Dawn Fighters), Sahabat Hijrahku (My Hijrah Companions), Binjai Sedekah Bersama (Binjai Alms-giving Together), Hijabers Komuniti (Hijabers Community), Klinik Nikah (Marriage Clinic) and, Kajian Muallaf (Islamic Convert Studies). Nevertheless, the expression of negative sentiments against Ahmadiyya, Shia and JIL remain frequent. The threat narratives have remained prominent in public discourse, especially at religious gatherings.

Along the same lines, recent research by Noorhaidi Hasan, Suhadi and collaborators (see Gradute School of UIN Sunan Kalijaga 2017) revealed that there are five main types of Islamic literature generally accessed by the millenial generation, namely *jihadi, tahriri, salafi, tarbawi* and popular Islamism. This Islamic literature is written and produced by Muslim or Islamic parties that have affiliations with certain Islamic groups, such as Jihadi (Jihadist groups), Tahriri (Hizb ut-Tahrir), Salafis (a reform model revivalist movement within Sunni Islam) and Tarbawi (which means education, guidance, nurturing and maintenance; it has emerged from the Islamic da'wah movement managed by students in campus mosques). In this study, *jihadi* literature appeared to be the least popular type, with popular Islamism the most favoured.

Another recent survey revealed that Indonesia ranked 60 out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest.[13] However, the 2017 study by Noorhaidi Hasan and Suhadi suggested otherwise. At least among the millenial generation, people in Java still read and explore the work of new authors who write about religious themes.

The same study also found that among young Muslims, Islamic classical literature such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir is less popular. This is despite the fact that Ibn Kathir's interpretation may be considered the most respected explanation of the Qur'an, and is perhaps the most widely used interpretation of the Qur'an in Arabic today. Similarly, the work of reformist scholars such as Sayyid Qutb and Hassan Al-Banna, although significant in certain circles, do not sell well in bookstores. Young Muslims find these books hard to understand and prefer the work of new authors such as Felix Siauw and other "new" Muslim preachers (*ustadz*), whose use of language is simple and does not patronise. The importance of looking closely at the younger generation has been emphasised by a number of scholars in the field (see, for example, Sebastian et al. 2014).

Jihadist literature emphasises the necessity of Muslims to wage *jihad*. *Tahriri* literature emphasises the idea of the revitalisation of the caliphate as a way of restoring the glory of Islam. *Salafi* literature offers the basis of identity claims and authenticity that refer directly to the original and main sources of Islamic faith. *Tarbawi* literature spreads the ideological mission of the Muslim Brotherhood and calls for changes to the current political order. In contrast, popular Islamism literature focuses on themes of daily life and offers a variety of practical guidelines in the form of trendy fiction and comics.

These are examples of how the narratives, oral and visual, of threat are maintained, formulated and reformulated in Indonesia today. They have become critical factors in the current formulation and reformulation of Islamic orthodoxy. In addition, the idea of maintaining Islamic orthodoxy often goes hand in hand with hot political and religious events in a region. Such events could have originated in, and have an impact on, national interests. This is what makes orthodoxy something that does not always belong to large groups or organisations and something that can have different dynamics in different areas.

## Concluding remarks

In an effort to defend religion, many mainstream Islamic groups in Indonesia have protested and organised numerous street demonstrations against minority groups. They have launched anti-Ahmadiyya, anti-Shia, anti-Islamic liberal movements to seek public support for defending the authenticity of Islam. Orthodoxy, in the sense of following common or generally accepted rules or religious beliefs, is used as a framework to defend Islam, despite the fact that several forms of understanding Islam have been practised for

centuries in Indonesia. At the regional level, there are differences in how Islamic orthodoxy is defended.

Islamic orthodoxy has been formulated and reformulated across time and space. The regional dynamics in Indonesia suggest that Islamic orthodoxy is not unchanging, unbending and inflexible. The threat narratives used to defend Islam have evolved from time to time, and the degree to which they are formulated or reformulated depend on a number of factors.

## Notes

* An earlier draft of this paper was originally presented at an international workshop on "Understanding the Rise of Islamism in Indonesia", RSIS Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and FISIP UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, January 31–February 1, 2018. I would like to sincerely thank Leonard C. Sebastian, Bahtiar Effendy, Alexander R. Arifianto and Syafiq Hasyim for organising this workshop and their kind support. This presentation was partly based on research on mainstream Islam and minority groups in Indonesia conducted between May and November 2017, funded by the Puslitpen research fellowships of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. I would like to thank Hodari, Mary Silvita, Sadawi and Mei Lina for their research assistantships in conducting fieldwork in Pontianak, Medan, Jakarta, Mataram and Surabaya.

1 Public discussion on *Palu Arit dalam Pandangan Islam* at FISIP Mosque, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, Tuesday, October 7, 2014.

2 Public discussion on "Countering Neo-Communism in Campus Intellectual Perspectives", held at the Kopertais Building, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Tuesday, July 2, 2013.

3 LPM Institut (UIN Jakarta), "Alfian Tanjung: Menyikapi Kebangkitan PKI", July 3, 2013.

4 In 2015, an online news portal reported his statement on this. See Intelijen (2015).

5 Maarif Institute (2017). The institute, in collaboration with PPIM UIN Jakarta, UNDP and local partners, conducted field research and organised FGDs in six cities – Padang, Denpasar, Tomohon, Surakarta, Cirebon and Sukabumi.

6 PPIM UIN Jakarta. 2018. "Diseminasi Hasil Survei Nasional Sikap Keberagamaan Guru Sekolah Madrasah di Indonesia", PPIM UIN Jakarta, Jakarta.

7 Ustadz Abdul Somad is a popular Muslim preacher from Pekanbaru, Riau. Some of his recorded sermons went viral on YouTube. See Tim Redaksi, 2018. *Ustadz Abdul Somad Ustadz Zaman Now*. Jakarta: Qultummedia. Felix Siauw is a popular Chinese Muslim preacher widely known for his affiliation with the transnational Islamist movement, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). See Weng (2018).

8 It is these two works of Shahab Ahmed which, among others, greatly influenced my perspective on how religious orthodoxy could be formed in certain contexts, and how it was reshaped at other times throughout history. My sincere thanks to Shahab Ahmed, Sukidi (Harvard University), Engseng Ho (Duke University), and Mun'im Sirry (University of Chicago) for their enlightening discussions and ideas on this topic.

9 For this research, our researcher Mary Silvita conducted interviews with several prominent Muslim activists in Medan in September 2017. See also Mary Silvita (2018).

10 For this research, our researcher Mary Silvita conducted interviews with several prominent Muslim activists in Mataram and Lombok areas in October 2017. See also Mary Silvita (2017).

11 For this research, our researcher Sadawi conducted interviews with several prominent Muslim activists in Surabaya, Sidoarjo and Pasuruan in September 2017. See Sadawi (2017).
12 For this research, our researcher Hodari conducted interviews with several prominent Muslim activists in Pontianak in September 2017. See Hodari 2017.
13 In the study by Central Connecticut State University in the US, Indonesia is one position below Thailand and one point above Botswana in the 61st position. Interestingly, in terms of reading infrastructure, Indonesia ranks above some European countries. See The Jakarta Post (2016).

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# 4 Examining the growth of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia

## The case of West Java

*Irman G. Lanti, Akim and Windy Dermawan**

### West Java: population, religion, and political antecedents

West Java is Indonesia's most populous province. With 48 million inhabitants, 18 per cent of Indonesia's 260 million people live in this province. Geographically, West Java makes up only 2 per cent of Indonesia's landmass, making it the second most densely populated province in Indonesia after the capital Jakarta. In 2000, Banten was set up as a separate province from West Java. Combined with Banten, which is culturally and ethnographically similar to the dominant ethnic group in West Java, this region of Indonesia has a population of 60 million. This means that almost one in four Indonesians live in the western Java region. West Java is also strategically situated, serving as a hinterland of Jakarta.

There are several sub-regions in West Java, i.e. (i) the Priangan (also known as the Parahyangan) area, home to the people of Sunda, comprising East Priangan (Ciamis, Banjar, Garut, Tasikmalaya, Kuningan, Majalengka), Central Priangan (Bandung – the province's capital, Cimahi, Sumedang, Purwakarta) and West Priangan (Cianjur, Sukabumi, Bogor); (ii) the North Coast area (Karawang, Subang, Indramayu and Cirebon); and (iii) the Jakarta hinterland (Bekasi, Depok and usually some parts of Bogor are included, as well as Tangerang, which has been part of Banten province since 2000).

While the Sundanese are the majority group in this province, West Java is culturally diverse. The North Coast area is influenced by the Cirebon culture that is quite distinct from that of the Sundanese and is considered midway between the Sundanese and Javanese cultures.[1] The hinterland of Jakarta is also dominated by the Betawi people (the native people of Jakarta), who have largely migrated to the outskirts of Jakarta to make way for developments in the capital city and the influx of migrants from all over the country.

West Java is predominantly Muslim. Ninety-seven per cent of its population profess Islam as their religion. This is in contrast to Central Java and to a lesser extent East Java, where there is a sizeable Christian population among the locals due to the Christian religious missionary (*zending*)

programmes of the colonial Dutch. In West Java, the colonials (mostly tea planters and government officials) largely kept to themselves. As a result, the number of non-Muslim native people, especially among the Sundanese, is very small, and largely concentrated in the urban centres.

Clifford Geertz (1960) famously studied in the town of Modjokuto, also known as Pare in East Java in the 1950s, and divided Javanese society into three categories based on religious practices, i.e. (i) the *priyayi* (the royal class), (ii) the *santri* (pious Muslims) and (iii) the *abangan* (nominal Muslims).[2] Compared to the wealth of literature available on the socio-religious aspect of Javanese society, similar studies in West Java on the Sundanese are relatively limited, and most are conducted as anthropological studies. A rough parallel can be drawn with Geertz' typology in West Java. Similar to East and Central Java, West Java is also home to many Islamic learning institutions (*pesantren*) and their *santri*. In Sundanese terms, the *kyai* is known as *ajengan* (or, more familiarly, *mama*). The *priyayi* is known as *menak*, and even though many *menak*'s religious outlook is syncretic, they are relatively more pious than the *priyayi* in Central and East Java and were known to have actively supported *pesantren* during the colonial era (Lubis 2003; Yahya 2003). In contrast to Central and East Java, the number of *abangan* followers, known in Sundanese as *Sunda Wiwitan*, is quite small, and usually concentrated in the eastern part of East Priangan, the seat of the old Padjadjaran Kingdom (Indrawardana 2014). Historically, there were a significant number of nationalist and even communist voters in the North Coast area during the 1955 elections. However, they generally did not follow the Central and East Javanese *abangan* practice. They were drawn to these leftist parties primarily due to class considerations, as poverty was quite high in that area.

As shall be explained in greater detail in the next section, West Java is the support base of modernist/reformist Muslim parties and groups. In 1955, 23 per cent of Masyumi votes came from West Java, making it the largest contributor of votes to a party that had its power base outside Java. West Java was also the province where the first Islamic rebellion broke out. Darul Islam (DI – Islamic state) first came into existence in West Java in August 1949 under its leader, Kartosuwiryo. By 1957, the Tentara Islam Indonesia (TII – Indonesian Islamic Army) controlled a third of this province. Eventually, the DI/TII spread out to South Sulawesi and Aceh and enjoyed limited support in Central Java and South Kalimantan. West Javan support for Islamist parties continued today. In the 2014 election, 60 per cent of West Javanese voted for Prabowo Subianto, who was supported by Islamist parties, and support for nationalist Joko Widodo (Jokowi) was a mere 40 per cent. In the Sunda area of West, Central and East Priangan, these figures ran even higher, with 68 per cent, 63 per cent, and 63 per cent respectively. Jokowi only won in the nationalist stronghold of North Coast, and even here he won only by 53 per cent.

## Islam in West Java: traditionalist religious practices, modernist political outlook

Islam came to West Java in two waves. It first came to West Java through Cirebon, with the the establishment, in 1482, of the Islamic Cirebon Sultanate by Sunan Gunungjati, who is considered one of the Nine Wali (*Wali Songo*) spreading Islam in Java. The second wave of Islamisation took place in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when an Islamised Mataram Sultanate occupied a West Java that was in a state of disarray after the fall of the Padjadjaran Kingdom. At the height of its power in the early 17th century, Islamic Mataram was the undisputed ruler of Java from west to east. At the fringe were Banten and Dutch-controlled Sunda Kelapa, which had already been renamed Batavia by the Dutch. Sultan Agung of Mataram sought to wrest control of this port city from the Dutch but failed to do so.

The establishment of the *pesantren* system in West Java occurred in parallel with the growth of these schools in East and Central Java. Since they came from the same tradition, the belief systems of these *pesantren* are similar. In fact, prior to the Dutch colonisation, most *pesantren* in West Java used the Javanese language in religious instruction rather than the local language of Sundanese (Yahya 2003; Mubarok and Yahya, personal communication, March 6, 2019). Like their brethren in East and Central Java, the West Javanese *pesantren* are also considered as following the Sunni tradition (*ahlussunnah wal jamaah* – aswaja). Also as in East and Central Java, the followers of the *pesantren* and their *kyai* (or in Sundanese, *ajengan*) are typically rural commoners. However, a smaller number of commoners practise *abangan* rituals in West Java compared to Central/East Java. Known as the followers of Sunda Wiwitan, they are concentrated mostly in the eastern part of East Priangan. As many of the Sundanese *menak* also attend *pesantren*, they enjoyed closer ties to the *pesantren* than the East and Central Java *priyayi* (Zimmer 2000).

Many anthropological scholars have observed that Islam came to Java without changing the existing societal structure. The tradition of the *pesantren* was inherited from the learning institutions of the earlier period of Hinduism in Indonesia that were characterised by teachers (*kyai* or *ajengan*) and students (*santri*) living in the same compound. They were mostly based in rural areas (Anderson 1972).[3] These institutions often offered critical views of the rule of the *priyayi* class (Anderson 1972: 63–67).[4] The arrival of Islam brought a new substance to this societal structure, but the structure itself remained largely unaltered. In the *priyayi* class, Mataram rulers switched their religious allegiance from Hinduism to Islam without greatly disturbing court traditions or the pattern of relationships between rulers and followers. In the *pesantren*, Islamic creeds replaced the Indic religious values without causing any meaningful alteration to the existing social structure, especially to the *kyai-santri* pattern of relationship.

Even today, the religious practices of West Javanese *pesantren* reflect significant inter-mixing between pre-Islamic and Islamic beliefs. Like their brethren in other parts of Java, religious teachings in the West Javanese *pesantren* are based on mastery of the "yellow book" (*kitab kuning*). These series of books contain the teaching on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqih*), creeds (*aqidah*), ethics (*akhlaq*) and, importantly spiritual mysticism (*tasawwuf*). The West Javanese *pesantren* also perform *tahlilan* (praying sessions in honour of the dead, usually citing the Surah of Yasin of the Holy Qur'an), and *ziarah kubur* (visiting graves and uttering prayers). They also celebrate the Maulid Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet).

Practices mentioned above are considered as heretical by modernist Muslims. Modernist Muslims are the second major wing of Indonesian Islam. The modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia was influenced by a similar movement in the Middle East led by reformers Muhammad Abduh, Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and Rashid Ridha in Egypt at the turn of the 20th century. This reform movement in Islam was the product of Western colonialism in the region. It started initially as a soul-searching intellectual movement seeking to comprehend the "defeat of Islam by the West". It criticised Islamic societies for having deviated from the true spirit of Islam as practised during the time of Prophet Mohammad and engaging in irrational and superstitious activities. It also attacked the huge wealth gap between the ruling aristocrats and the masses, arguing that the message of Islam required that the organisation of Muslim societies be based on egalitarianism (Armstrong 2000: 121–133). In short, this movement sought to reform, purify and modernise Islam.[5] The religious practices of the traditionalists are sometimes branded by the modernists as *takhyul* (irrationality), *bid'ah* (deviant practices) and *khurafat* (superstitious practices).[6] The differences in Islamic practice between these two schools of thought in Indonesia define the fault line not only in the social life of Indonesians but also, as we shall see, in the politics of the country, including in West Java (Prasetyo and Munhanif 2002).

Several scholars term these two groupings, as well as nationalism, as streams of political thinking in Indonesia, or political *aliran*. Clifford Geertz (1959) defines aliran as "a political party surrounded by a set of voluntary social organisations formally or informally linked to it." Taking a more anthropological view, Ben Anderson (1972) defines it as "a distinctive, integrated cultural outlook, together with its organised and unorganised (but potentially organisable) adherents". Irman Lanti (2004: 68) combines the two definitions by referring to *aliran* as "a distinctive politico-cultural set of beliefs, represented in the public sphere by a number of social organisations, and in the political sphere by a political party".

On the social organisation side, the modernists set up Muhammadiyah in 1912. Through Muhammadiyah, the modernists built a network of schools that taught both Islamic and secular subjects. At the time, the modernist school system even rivalled the formal education system set up by the Dutch colonial administration. Muhammadiyah also established wings for women,

students and youth, as well as a disaster relief organisation that was later developed into hospitals and polyclinics. From the 1920s, Muhammadiyah became the largest – and the first comprehensive – social organisation in Indonesia (Benda 1958). The key social organisation of Islamic traditionalism in Indonesia is Nahdatul Ulama (NU), set up in 1926. NU was an amalgamation of two previous social and educational organisations, Nahdatul Watan established in 1914 and Tashwirul Afkar in 1918. While NU similarly established some health service establishments, it was primarily known for its network of *pesantren* that provided an education for rural populations and became the alternative to the modern school system set up by the Dutch (Choirie 2002; Daman 2001).

On the political side, Islam influenced the nation building process in Indonesia since the very beginning. Sarekat Islam (SI), established in 1912, was one of the first independence movements in Indonesia. It was set up by the modernists to propagate Indonesian nationalism along with its nationalist counterpart, Budi Utomo. SI was the dominant organisation until its split into red (leftist/communist) and white (Islamist) factions in 1920. Another modernist organisation would fill this void, Majlis Islam A'laa Indonesia (MIAI – Indonesian Islamic Council), set up in 1937. During the Japanese occupation that provided some space for Indonesians to establish organisations, MIAI was transformed into Masyumi (Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia – Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims) in November 1943 (Benda 1958). The Masyumi was the umbrella organisation of both modernists and traditionalists. NU was one of the constituent organisations of the Masyumi when the latter was declared as a political party after independence in 1945. But tension was growing within the party as the traditionalists viewed this as modernist dominance, especially in the party's central leadership. A split between the two *aliran* then became inevitable. In 1952, just three years prior to Indonesia's first election, the traditionalists announced that they left Masyumi and declared NU to be a political party (Daman 2001: 94–103).

NU arrived in West Java in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Despite the similarities in the religious practices of Muslims in West Java with those in East and Central Java, the traditionalist institution was not well received in West Java. NU had a non-cooperative stance vis-à-vis the colonial administration at that time and this strategy was seen in East and Central Java as part of opposition to and criticism of the *priyayi* class who aligned themselves closely with the Dutch administration. But in West Java the colonial administration was relatively more successful in establishing a better rapport with the *pesantren*. This was partly due to the closer relationship between the *menak* (royal class) and *ajengan* (religious teachers) in West Java compared to the often adversarial relationship of *priyayi-santri* in East and Central Java. It was also because the *menak* class also enjoyed a close affinity to the *pesantren*. The colonial administration wanted to be more accommodating to Muslims to avoid rebellion in the rural area. Rural West Java at that time

produced one of the most important commodities for the Dutch through its many tea plantations. As a result, West Java in the 1930s had an institution called "*izharu baiatil muluk wal umara*"[7] that was formed to handle the affairs of Muslims, led by Ajengan K.H. Suja'i. Many *ajengan* joined this institution, and they were known as the *ulama kaum* – prominent *ulama* (Mubarok and Yahya, personal communication, March 6, 2019; Yahya 2006).

Thus, when NU began advocating a non-cooperative stance with the colonial authorities, its message was not well received. It was deemed a foreign element seeking to undermine the power and influence of the *ulama kaum* (Mubarok and Yahya, personal communication, March 6, 2019).[8] During the Japanese occupation, these traditionalist *ajengan* formed their own institutions, known as the Persatuan Umat Islam (PUI) – which later became the Persatuan Umat Islam Indonesia (PUII) and joined MIAI. Another institution that was formed was the Al-Ittihadiyatul Islamiyah (AII). PUI and AII then joined Masyumi after independence. In 1952, when NU left Masyumi, these West Javanese traditionalists did not follow suit and instead solidified their position within Masyumi by creating a fusion between PUII and AAI to form the PUI, reverting to the old name.[9]

In Indonesia's first election in 1955, NU contested the elections on a separate ticket from Masyumi and was able to garner 14 per cent of the votes in West Java. Its support was mostly concentrated in Tasikmalaya and Cirebon areas where most of the NU *pesantren* were situated. This was less than half the votes achieved by Masyumi, which won this election with 39 per cent of votes, and even less than the votes received by the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI – Indonesian Communist Party). This situation did not change much until recent years. The 2014 presidential election saw Prabowo, who was nominated by Islamist parties, conclusively beat Jokowi, who was backed by a combination of nationalist and traditionalist parties, with a vote difference of nearly five million. Prabowo won 59.78 per cent of the votes in the province, Jokowi 40.22 per cent. If combined with the votes from Banten province that was separated from West Java in 2000 but was still part of it in 1955, the difference in votes between the two candidates in the 2014 election becomes 5.4 million. The nation-wide results of the rematch between the two candidates in the 2019 elections saw an increase in Jokowi's share of votes from 53.15 to 55.50 per cent. Prabowo lost the 2019 elections by a wider margin – from commanding 46.85 per cent in 2014 to 44.50 in 2019. But this was not the case in West Java. In this province with the largest number of voters in Indonesia, Prabowo consolidated his victory in 2019 and increased his share of votes from 59.78 per cent in 2014 to 59.93 per cent in 2019. West Java became one of the few provinces where Jokowi failed to win the election, at a further reduced share of votes from 40.22 to 40.07 per cent. If combined with Banten, the difference in votes between Jokowi and Prabowo in 2019 becomes almost seven million.

West Java was the province where the first Islamic rebellion broke out. The DI/TII movement that eventually spread to several provinces[10] was initiated

in West Java and persisted for nearly one and a half decades. The rebellion and the establishment of the Negara Islam Indonesia (NII – Indonesian Islamic State) were led by Kartosuwiryo. Kartosuwiryo was one of the independence activists. He was a leader in the Islamic independence movement from the 1930s, serving as vice-chair of the West Java chapter of Sarekat Islam and later helping found Masyumi after independence. He was responsible for setting up the Dewan Pertahanan Umat Islam (Defence Council of the Islamic Community) in West Java in 1947 and served as Masyumi's representative in the Council. This council functioned largely as the central command for groups of militias (*laskar*) made up from among the *santri* in the West Javanese *pesantren*. These militias were divided into two groups, the Sabilillah and the Hizbullah, formed at the end of the Japanese occupation. They were seen as Masyumi's military response to the Dutch attempt to recolonise Indonesia. In West Java, they were particularly loyal to Kartosuwiryo (Dijk 1981; Formichi 2012).

The rebellion started as a result of the Renville Agreement in January 1948, which required the Siliwangi (West Java) Division of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) to evacuate West Java and move to the Republican areas in and around Yogyakarta in Central Java. Kartosuwiryo and the Islamic *laskar* vehemently rejected this agreement and vowed to fight the incoming Dutch in West Java. Kartosuwiryo then proclaimed the NII on 20 December 1948, a week after the Dutch "second police action" against the republican capital of Yogyakarta. But even after the Dutch left Indonesia in 1949 and after the return to the unitary state from the federal arrangement brokered by the Dutch in 1950, DI/TII remained active and the task of quelling the rebellion fell to the TNI, which was previously allied with the *laskar* in fighting the colonial Dutch. DI/TII was only subdued when Kartosuwiryo was apprehended in 1962.

An interesting aspect of this rebellion is that Kartosuwiryo and his followers were not followers of Islamic orthodoxy as one might imagine from knowledge of perpetrators of violent extremism in today's world. They were faithful practitioners of Islamic traditionalism. In 1940, Kartosuwiryo established the Institut Supah (or Suffah Institute) in Malangbong, Garut. Suffah is usually considered as the root word of *tasawwuf* and sufism (mystical Islam). This is a practice that is common among traditionalist adherents but considered heretical by orthodox, or purist, Muslims who comprise the majority of Masyumi's followers. Kartosuwiryo also had in his possession heirlooms items such as a dagger and swords when he was captured in 1962. These items were known in traditional Javanese society to provide the owner with magical power and mystical authority (Dengel 1995; Jackson 1980). A diary of one of the TII fighters who fell into the hands of the TNI also indicated that there were practically no religious indoctrination sessions held in the TII encampments. The diary even details mystical practices undertaken by the fighters (Jackson 1980: 17).[11] In fact, the rural community of West Java had most likely supported DI/TII because Kartosuwiryo matched the popular

perception of a holy man in possession of supernatural knowledge (the "bullet-proof" man), reflecting the persistence of pre-Islamic superstitions associated with the *abangan* or traditional Muslim practices (Boland 1971).

This situation, where religious practices are traditionalist but the socio-political outlook is modernist, is acknowledged by modern NU activists in West Java. According to them, the dichotomy between cultural and structural NU is relevant here, albeit with a different twist. This terminology was coined during the New Order era as part of the regime's attempt to garner support from this organisation, which many saw as the politicisation of the NU. The terminology of "structural" NU was applied to NU leaders and activists who agreed with it, while the "cultural" NU referred to those who preferred to remain outside the political sphere and conduct social and educational activities (Hasyim 1999: 3). Another interpretation of the structural vs cultural divide lies in the position of individuals in NU's formal organisation. Those who occupy positions in the NU's national or local organisation are considered "structural", those who do not are placed in the "cultural" category (Ismail 2019).[12] In the context of West Java, this typology is less relevant. Here, cultural NU refers to the *santri* and *ajengan* (*kyai*) in the *salafiyah* (traditional) *pesantren*, whose religious practices are in conformity with the traditionalists' tenets, whether or not they are actually members of NU, while the structural NU simply refers to those who are card-carrying members of NU, regardless of whether they are part of the NU's functionaries in the province's formal organisation.[13] They usually refer to this phenomenon as sharing common religious practices (*amaliyah*), thinking (*fikrah*) and spirit (*ghirah*), but being different in terms of the movement (*harakah*) (Mubarok and Yahya, March 6, 2019). A number of *salafiyah kyai* in West Javanese *pesantren* admitted these commonalities and differences with NU. In the words of Hasyim (personal communication, January 23, 2019):

> We think that NU has the best teaching for religious practices, but we also think that Muhammadiyah has the best thinking for social life.

## The arrival of "new *dakwah*" in West Java: between accommodation and resistance

Indonesian society has been experiencing religious revivalism. This is especially true for Muslims undergoing the so-called "*santrinisasi*" process.[14] Like all social processes, *santrinisasi* did not happen overnight. In fact, its roots can be traced back to the late 1980s and early 1990s when Nurcholish Madjid[15] established Paramadina – initially as a religious study group for the urban middle and upper class, with study sessions in various upscale hotels in Jakarta. After the fall of the New Order, religious organisations could operate openly and the process of *santrinisasi* gained momentum. Various Islamist groups that had hitherto been subjected to close scrutiny and largely operated underground now resurfaced. The post-Suharto era was marked by the

re-establishment of Islamic-leaning parties that contested the free and fair election in 1999, such as Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB – Crescent Star Party), Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN – National Mandate Party), and *Partai* Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB – National Awakening Party). However, the arrival of a new player, Partai Keadilan (PK – Justice Party) and the fact that it performed well during the election startled many students of Indonesian politics. In fact, PK (which later transformed into Partai Keadilan Sejahtera – Prosperous Justice Party – PKS) reflected the cultivation of Islamism in Indonesia's campuses through the *jemaah* or *gerakan tarbiyah* (Educational Movement) since the 1980s and 1990s (Damanik 2002). This was then followed with the arrival of various other groups. Hizbut Tahrir entered Indonesia at about the same time as the *tarbiyah* movement and also penetrated campuses, primarily the campus of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB – Bogor Agricultural Institute, and quickly spread to other campuses. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) rejects the Indonesian state and propagates the establishment of a *khilafah* (caliphate) in Indonesia as part of the larger *khilafah* in the Muslim world. In 2000, HTI held the first international conference on the Islamic caliphate, which was attended by 5,000 participants from various parts of the world (Ward 2009).

The influx of *salafi* ideas was also met with enthusiasm on campuses. The movement, supported by the Saudi government, espouses the purist form of Wahabi Islam. The Wahdah Islamiyah as a leading *salafi* institution was established as a mass organisation in 2002. The Saudi government also funded Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (LIPIA – Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences), with its large campus in the southern part of Jakarta, from 1980. But the Institute became particularly active in the *dakwah* (religious propagation) movement from the early 2000s. LIPIA is known to produce *salafi*-oriented *ustadz* (religious teachers). A home-grown institution, Front Pembela Islam (FPI – Islamic Defender Front) was also a product of the Reformasi era (as the post-Suharto period is generally referred to). FPI was initially established as a vigilante group with close links to the security establishment. Since the early 2010s it has grown to be a credible organisation and claims a membership of seven million across Indonesia; it was the main organiser behind the Aksi Bela Islam 212 (Action to Defend Islam, 2 December 2016) against then Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) who was accused of blasphemy against Islam. Another movement that gained many new followers is the Jemaah Tabligh. This movement is popular among the younger generation because it has been responsible for the phenomenon of "*hijrah*" (migration from a non-Islamic to an Islamic lifestyle) among public figures such as musicians and movie artists. The movement is non-political and, while promoting further *santrinisasi* in Indonesia, especially among the young, urban middle class, does not seem to harbour any political ambition (Aziz 2004). That said, the majority of its followers supported Prabowo's candidacy in both the 2014 and 2019 elections.

All these different organisations hold different views about Islam and its role in Indonesia. But all press for the application of *Syariah* (Islamic law) in

Indonesia (Mietzner 2018). These new *Dakwah* groups now enjoy virtually the same level of popularity in Indonesia as the previously existing groups with their much longer presence and tradition, such as NU, Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (Persis – Islamic Union) in the case of West Java. M.C. Ricklefs even calls this movement "revivalist" and puts it alongside the traditionalist and modernist Islamic streams in Indonesia (Ricklefs 2012). One of the distinctive features of the new *Dakwah* movement is the use of information technology. Groups are particularly active in using social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter in their activities. Many new *ustadz* have a dedicated media team that record their *tabligh* and *ceramah* (sermon) engagements and then post them online, which can be accessed via YouTube by anyone. Many of them even have their own YouTube channels with millions of followers (Rusli 2013). This signifies the young, urban middle-class nature of this movement, which continues the tradition, begun in the1980s, of attracting educated Indonesians to the new *Dakwah*.

These new movements have come into West Java since their inception. University campuses in West Java such as IPB, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB – Bandung Institute of Technology), Padjadjaran University and others have long been the hotbed of such movements. These movements have also penetrated general society. The link with Middle Eastern institutions, mainly Saudi-funded ones, is mainly for the purpose of networking based on similarity of thought (*fikrah*) and the method of *dakwah* (*manhaj*). The connection with the main clerics of the Middle East, such as Dr Yusuf Qardhawi for the *tarbiyah* movement and Syeikh Abdullah Bin Baaz for the *salafi* movement, is chiefly sustained electronically nowadays. However, all the individuals of the new *Dakwah* movement in West Java who were interviewed claimed that they maintain a high degree of autonomy and organisational independence. They rarely receive contributions from outside West Java, let alone Indonesia. Their main source of income is members' contributions and the revenue from some forms of business that the organisations run.

In the past, a number of clerics from West Java have studied in Middle Eastern institutions, mostly in Saudi Arabia. Syeikh Nawawi al-Bantani from Banten was one of the first – he studied in Mecca at the end of the 19th century. A number of PUI's founders, such as Abdul Halim and Ahmad Sanusi, also studied in Mecca. This tradition has continued with activists of the new *dakwah* movement. A number of them studied at institutions in the Middle East. Hilmi Aminuddin (former chair of the Advisory Body of PKS) studied at Medina University, Saudi Arabia. Yazid bin Abdul Qodir Jawaz (a second-generation *salafi*) studied at the University of Imam Muhammad Ibnu Sa'ud. The founder of HTI Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi was a cleric from Jordan who eventually resided in Bogor. A number of *pesantren* leaders interviewed in this research, such as Maksum Abdurrahman (of Pesantren Nurussalam, Ciamis), Abdullah Muadz (of Pesantren As-Syifa Alkhoeriyah, Subang) and Ahmad Syaikhu (former Head of PKS West Java provincial board), also studied in the Middle East.

That said, the great majority of traditionalist *ajengan* in West Java were trained locally. Pesantren Miftahul Huda in Manonjaya, Tasikmalaya (southeast of Bandung) is the primary learning organisation, producing hundreds of *ajengan* who go on to establish their own *pesantren*, not only in West Java but throughout Indonesia. As a traditionalist institution, the learning method in Manonjaya follows that of the traditionalist *pesantren* brethren in Central and East Java, which relies heavily on the memorisation of the *kitab kuning* (yellow book). The founder of Miftahul Huda, K.H. Choer Affandi, is a former protégé of S.M. Kartosuwiryo, the leader of DI/TII. Neither Choer nor Kartosuwiryo attended any Middle Eastern educational institution and instead received most of their religious tutelage from the local traditionalist *ajengan*.

The new *dakwah* movement does not actually have any major theological differences with the traditionalist *pesantren* in West Java since they both follow the same Sunni (*ahlussunnah wal jamaah*) tradition. Having been influenced heavily by clerics from Saudi Arabia, the *salafi* and *wahabi* tend to follow the Hambali school of thought (*madzhab*) prevalent in the Middle East, whereas the traditionalist *pesantren* generally follow the Syafii *madzhab* widely practised in Southeast Asia. However, this difference is not a major issue since most people involved in the new *dakwah* movement are not too inclined to follow any specific *madzhab* and tend to be eclectic in this regard. The real differences between the traditional *pesantren* and the new *dakwah* movement lie in the religious practices (*furu'iyah*). As noted above, one of the learning tools in the traditionalist *pesantren* is the *kitab kuning*, and traditionalists carry out *ziarah* (grave visits) and *tahlil* (praying for the dead), celebrate Maulid (the birth of the Prophet) and recite certain prayers after the compulsory prayers (*qunut*), which many new *dakwah* movement followers consider to be local innovations bordering on heresy (*bid'ah*). The differences at first glance seem minor and even for many Muslims they appear inconsequential, but for traditionalist Muslims the practices have become a matter of identity and are often viewed as affirming the authority of the traditionalist *pesantren* and their *ajengan*. Thus, the presence and increasing prevalence of the new *dakwah* movement in West Java is generally viewed as presenting a sociological threat to the traditionalist *pesantren*.

In Central and East Java, the new *dakwah* movement also presents a socio-political threat to the traditionalist *pesantren*, especially due to its Islamist views that run contrary to the tolerant, flexible views of many of the *pesantren*. This issue is not so salient in West Java. As noted above, the demographic fact that West Java has a relatively small number of non-Muslims and a considerably smaller number of *abangan* compared to Central and East Java have produced traditionalist *pesantren* that stay true to traditionalist religious practices but hold socio-political worldviews that are more similar to those of modernist Muslim groups. This in turn creates an ambiguity for West Javanese *pesantren* dealing with the new *dakwah* movement.

## West Javanese ambivalence towards the new *dakwah* movement

From the interviews conducted with a number of leading Islamic figures in the province, there is a degree of ambivalence felt towards the arrival of these movements. The West Javanese would like to claim that theirs is a society open to guests coming from outside and new ideas. There is a saying in the culture that the Sundanese are "*someah, hade ka semah*" (friendly, kind to guests). With respect to Islam, this is true to the extent that the new ideas do not pose an affront to the conservative values espoused by the society. For instance, the liberal ideas of marriage equality and even acceptance of homosexuality would be a tremendously difficult sell for the West Javanese. Despite plurality in the cultural makeup across the different sub-regions of West Java, the society is pretty homogenous with regard to religion.

The West Java Provincial Agency of Population and Civil Registry in 2018 identified that 97.23 per cent of West Javanese were Muslims, with the non-Muslim population concentrated in the urban centres, particularly the capital city of Bandung and the Jakarta hinterland cities of Bogor, Bekasi and Depok. Thus, for instance, the election of Ahok (a double minority) as Jakarta governor was considered baffling by most West Javanese. According to a number of leading Islamic figures interviewed, West Java contributed the vast majority of participants in the Aksi 212 demonstration in Jakarta.

When some of these Islamic figures were asked about potential threats to Islam in West Java, they see Syiah, Ahmadiyah and liberal Muslims as bigger threats than the new *Dakwah* movement. The Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) even initiated the establishment of the Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah (ANAS – National Anti-Syiah Alliance) (Dr Rachim, personal communication, January 25, 2019). Most of the traditionalist-conservative *ajengan* interviewed had an equivocal view of the new *dakwah* movement. On the one hand, they perceive that their proponents come from their midst and that the traditional *pesantren* maintain a cordial relationship with them and often engage with them in open discussion and other activities. Some of them even perceive that the movement contributes to improving the understanding of Islam and, further, may consolidate the piety of the population in practising Islam (Suhada, personal communication, March 7, 2019). None of them suggested that the new *dakwah* movement constituted an ominous or imminent threat; rather, they pointed out the necessity to maintain Islamic unity among the different groups. Here we can see the West Javanese creed of being friendly and open to new ideas coming from outsiders. On the other hand, the traditional *pesantren* still regard the new *dakwah* movement as a misinterpretation of Islam, despite the need to continue engaging with them, not only in an effort to correct the misinterpretation but also to keep the Muslim brotherhood (*ukhuwah islamiyah*) intact.

The notable exception on this point comes from the West Java Provincial Board of NU. Like the other non-NU traditional *pesantren*, the NU provincial board sees the new *dakwah* movement as representing religious beliefs

and practices that are different from those of the majority of West Javanese. However, unlike the others, which see the potential of collaboration with the movement, NU feels threatened by the rise of these groups. In order to tackle this, NU has taken several active measures such as launching awareness campaigns about the "danger" that the new movement presents. These communications are directed at the general public but more importantly at the NU-affiliated *pesantren* in the province, producing a new generation of *ustadz* that are expected to counter the popularity of the new *dakwah* movement's *ustadz*. Separately, the NU uses social media extensively as part of outreach to the new generation, as well as offline activities like the commemoration of Santri Day. NU also seeks to collaborate with the provincial board of Muhammadiyah and Persis to tackle the new movement, which has been met with a lukewarm response, understandably. But interestingly, as part of the nation-wide introduction of the concept of Islam Nusantara (archipelagic Islam), the West Java board took an active part in promoting NU's values internationally, such as to Malaysia, Afghanistan, several Middle Eastern countries and other countries in the region (Mubarok and Yahya, personal communication, March 6, 2019).

Yet, almost all the traditional *pesantren* in West Java feel the impact of the extensive use of social media by the new *dakwah* movement. While there continues to be a digital divide in the country, Indonesia is one of the countries in the world that makes extensive use of social media. Around 150 million of its population (around 58 per cent) are internet users, making it the third-highest internet-user country in Asia-Pacific and fourth in the world. More than 80 million of the internet users are accessing it on their mobile phones. Around the same number are active users of social media – some 70 million Indonesians are Facebook users (around 27 per cent of its population). The four most popular social media outlets for Indonesians are YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. Annual growth of social media users in Indonesia is 23 per cent. With this level of growth it is no wonder that social media has been used widely for *dakwah* purposes. The lack of a clear authority structure in most of the groups of the new *dakwah* movement creates an open space for its followers to use social media in the most creative way possible. At the same time, public access to religious information is also open and provides an avenue for instant answers to any questions. The use of social and audio-visual media for *dakwah* purposes is a recent trend in Indonesia, including in West Java. The most famous of West Javanese *kyai* with national appeal, K.H. Abdullah Gymnastiar (also known as Aa Gym), combined regular teaching via his *pesantren* in North Bandung (Pesantren Daarut Tauhid) with airing on a TV channel (MQ TV) and the radio (MQ FM). A young Bandung-based *ustadz*, Hanan Attaki, uses social media extensively through his Pemuda Hijrah (Hijrah Youth) network. He appeals mostly to the millennial generation by using Twitter, Facebook and websites combined with an occasional *pengajian* (religious gathering).

Some traditional religious leaders in West Java have already felt the pressure of social media. The erosion of authority of the *ajengan* has become a common phenomenon other than for *pesantren* in very rural settings not connected to the internet. It is not uncommon for the *ustadz* and *ajengan* to be asked critical questions by the attendees of religious congregations (*pengajian* or *majelis ta'lim*), as their teachings are cross-referenced with easily obtainable information on the internet (Dr Bachtiar, personal communication, January 22, 2019). Many *ustadz* and *ajengan* are responding by themselves making use of social media for their *dakwah*, either programmatically – for example, the PW NU, with its wide network involving TV penetration, websites and other media – or incidentally, with religious congregations recorded by attendees and then uploaded onto YouTube or other social media. It is likely that the future battle for the hearts and minds of West Javanese Muslims, especially for the millennial generation, will take place in cyberspace.

## The future of politics in West Java: conservative turn in a conservative land or structural inroads by traditionalists?

Many scholars of Indonesian politics have asserted that Indonesia is currently undergoing a conservative turn, especially among its Muslim population. Leonard Sebastian and Andar Nurbowo (2019), for example, argue that the rise of conservative Islamic forces has deep and pervasive consequences for Indonesian politics and is a phenomenon that will have a long-term impact on Indonesia's future. Martin van Bruinessen's (2013) edited book discusses the causal factors of the conservative turn in Indonesian Islam by looking at the experience of a number of organisations in several parts of the country. Robert Hefner (2011) asked questions about the lack of resistance to this encroaching *santrinisasi* by the *abangan*. Marcus Mietzner (2018) even posits that this phenomenon and the lack of proper response from the nationalist government have brought about a deconsolidation of Indonesian democracy. Van Bruinessen (2018), on the other hand, argues that a response to the conservative turn will more likely come from traditionalist Muslims than from the government via the indigenisation of Islam through the concept of Islam Nusantara.[16] How would this phenomenon play out in West Java? Would we see a further conservative turn in a historically conservative land? What potential is there for the emergence of a counter-narrative to the new *dakwah* movement in West Java? What are the consequences for politics in the province, which, given its size as Indonesia's largest province, will no doubt have a significant impact on national politics.

As seen in tables 4.1 to 4.3 below, the political outlook of the West Javanese is quite different from that of their neighbours in East and Central Java, despite the similarity in religious teachings. The pattern of voters' choices across the three provinces in the 1955 election for the traditionalist NU and the modernist Masyumi is illustrative of the difference.

*Table 4.1* The votes shares of Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the 1955 general election

| *West Java* | *Central Java* | *East Java* |
|---|---|---|
| Masyumi<br>74% | NU<br>72% | NU<br>75% |
| NU<br>26% | Masyumi<br>28% | Masyumi<br>25% |

Source: Indonesian Election Commission (KPU)

*Table 4.2* The votes shares of Jokowi and Prabowo in the 2014 general election

| *West Java + Banten* | *Central Java* | *East Java* |
|---|---|---|
| Prabowo<br>59% | Jokowi<br>67% | Jokowi<br>53% |
| Jokowi<br>41% | Prabowo<br>33% | Prabowo<br>47% |

Source: Indonesian Election Commission (KPU)

*Table 4.3* The votes shares of Jokowi and Prabowo in the 2019 general election

| *West Java + Banten* | *Central Java* | *East Java* |
|---|---|---|
| Prabowo<br>60% | Jokowi<br>77% | Jokowi<br>66% |
| Jokowi<br>40% | Prabowo<br>23% | Prabowo<br>34% |

Source: Indonesian Election Commission (KPU)

A similar voting pattern is apparent again during the presidential election in 2014, which pitted the modernist-backed Prabowo Subianto against the nationalist-traditionalist candidate Jokowi.

This pattern of voters' preferences in West Java was further consolidated in the 2019 presidential election, which saw a repeat of the 2014 election between the nationalist Jokowi paired up with the traditionalist cleric K.H. Ma'ruf Amin and Prabowo, now paired with a Muslim businessman, Sandiaga Uno.

Although Jokowi increased his vote share in Central and East Java, which was critical to his victory in the 2019 presidential elections, West Java's political preference remained solidly opposed to that of Central and East Java. Prabowo's lead in West Java even increased to 60 per cent, if Banten is added to the calculation.

If we compare the tables above, one can infer that there is a decreasing level of conservatism in West Java today compared to 1955. It should be noted, however, that there are more than sixty years between the 1955 and the 2014

and 2019 elections, including the 32 years of New Order rule that tended to be less cordial towards Islamic modernism for at least a good part of this period. Other changes that have taken place since 1955 are population growth and an influx of migrants, especially to the Jakarta hinterland of West Java. If in the 1955 elections, West Java had roughly around six million voters, compared to Central Java with ten million and East Java's 11 million, in the 2019 elections, West Java's voters surpassed those of the other regions in Java, with around 33 million registered voters compared to 31 million in East Java and 27.5 million in Central Java. If combined with the Banten province, which in 1955 was still part of West Java and sociologically still has a lot of similarity to the mother province, this figure rises to around 41 million – 21 per cent of all voters in Indonesia. West Java (and Banten) contributed around 28 per cent of all votes attained by Prabowo in the 2014 elections, and this increased to 29 per cent in the 2019 election, which is higher than the region's 23 per cent vote contribution to Masyumi's votes in the 1955 elections.[17] Hence, this is a plausible argument for the deepening of conservatism in the province despite all the migration that has taken place.

The regional divide between West Java's regions also did not change much from 1955. The DI/TII's regions of Priangan remain unchanged in their political behaviour, i.e. politically conservative and largely supporting Islamist parties. The relatively more nationalist-traditionalist stronghold of the North Coast is still a "red" area (Dr Bachtiar, personal communication, January 22, 2019).[18] Table 4.4 below from the 2019 presidential election illustrates this phenomenon.

In Banten Province (see Table 4.4, for districts/municipalities in bold), Prabowo won all the districts/municipalities except for a razor-thin margin of 51 per cent in South Tangerang Municipality. This area is primarily composed of ethnic Chinese minority groups and is therefore demographically dissimilar from the rest of Banten.

Compared with the results of the 2014 election, Prabowo's share of votes has increased across the sub-regions, with the greatest swing in support of Prabowo in Banten – from 59 to 67 per cent. Ironically, Jokowi's choice of vice-presidential candidate, K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, actually hailed from Banten, a clear indication that Ma'ruf Amin failed to persuade many voters to support Jokowi. This was despite major campaigns mounted by Jokowi in West Java and the support the Jokowi campaign received from the governor and vice-governor of the province. In addition, Jokowi garnered more votes in the North Coast of West Java, similar to the *abangan* and traditionalist provinces of Central and East Java, in the 2019 election. Here, Jokowi has increased his share of votes from 53 per cent in 2014 to 58 per cent in 2019.

The electoral data above indicates the similarity between the results of the 1955 and 2019 elections and the tenacity of the *aliran* division in West Java and Indonesia despite the time and generational differences. It also indicates a deepening of the modernist roots in West Java alongside a

*Table 4.4* Number of votes attained in the 2019 presidential election of West Java (including Banten) – per sub-region

| *Sub-regions/districts/ municipalities* | *Candidates* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Prabowo/Sandi* | *Percent-age* | *Jokowi/ Ma'ruf* | *Percent-age* |
| | | *West Priangan* | | |
| Sukabumi District | 1,012,116 | 72% | 400,644 | 28% |
| Bogor District | 2,035,552 | 70% | 862,122 | 30% |
| Sukabumi Municipality | 139,106 | 70% | 61,835 | 30% |
| Cianjur | 775,354 | 63% | 461,787 | 37% |
| *Total* | *3,962,128* | *69%* | *1,786,388* | *31%* |
| | | *Banten (without Jakarta hinterland)* | | |
| **Serang** | **649,982** | **70%** | **275,251** | **30%** |
| **Cilegon Municipality** | **177,568** | **70%** | **76,455** | **30%** |
| **Serang Municipality** | **266,505** | **70%** | **116,702** | **30%** |
| **Lebak** | **489,793** | **65%** | **260,148** | **35%** |
| **Pandeglang** | **443,323** | **63%** | **263,523** | **37%** |
| *Total* | *2,027,171* | *67%* | *992,079* | *33%* |
| | | *East Priangan* | | |
| Tasikmalaya Municipality | 314,247 | 74% | 111,785 | 26% |
| Garut | 1,068,444 | 72% | 412,136 | 28% |
| Tasikmalaya District | 729,024 | 71% | 302,132 | 29% |
| Kuningan | 376,259 | 60% | 252,373 | 40% |
| Ciamis | 440,240 | 59% | 303,323 | 41% |
| Majalengka | 425,877 | 55% | 346,980 | 45% |
| Banjar Municipality | 55,732 | 47% | 63,295 | 53% |
| *Total* | *3,409,823* | *66%* | *1,792,024* | *34%* |
| | | *Central Priangan* | | |
| Purwakarta | 406,988 | 72% | 155,863 | 28% |
| West Bandung | 649,988 | 64% | 359,220 | 36% |
| Cimahi Municipality | 214,452 | 64% | 120,813 | 36% |
| Bandung District | 1,246,921 | 62% | 778,826 | 38% |
| Bandung Municipality | 867,945 | 58% | 621,969 | 42% |
| Sumedang | 408,929 | 57% | 310,579 | 43% |
| *Total* | *3,795,223* | *62%* | *2,347,270* | *38%* |
| | | *Jakarta hinterland* | | |
| Bekasi District | 1,046,487 | 64% | 593,424 | 36% |
| Bogor Municipality | 399,073 | 64% | 228,112 | 36% |
| **Tangerang District** | **1,079,010** | **62%** | **669,423** | **38%** |

| *Sub-regions/districts/ municipalities* | *Candidates* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Prabowo/Sandi* | *Percent-age* | *Jokowi/ Ma'ruf* | *Percent-age* |
| Depok Municipality | 618,527 | 57% | 464,472 | 43% |
| Bekasi Municipality | 752,254 | 55% | 617,907 | 45% |
| **Tangerang Municipality** | **562,963** | **55%** | **464,992** | **45%** |
| **South Tangerang Municipality** | **390,370** | **49%** | **411,030** | **51%** |
| *Total* | *4,848,684* | *58%* | *3,449,360* | *42%* |
| | *North Coast* | | | |
| Karawang | 779,266 | 57% | 584,682 | 43% |
| Cirebon Municipality | 93,036 | 47% | 103,878 | 53% |
| Subang | 392,882 | 42% | 537,114 | 58% |
| Cirebon District | 449,455 | 35% | 823,900 | 65% |
| Indramayu | 282,349 | 29% | 707,324 | 71% |
| *Total* | *1,996,988* | *42%* | *2,756,898* | *58%* |

Source: Indonesian Election Commission (KPU)

conservative turn in the conservative land of West Java. This observation has been confirmed by all the interviewees, who pointed to an increased level of piety in Islamic practices among West Javanese, even among the *menak* class and urban population that in 1955 tended to vote for the nationalists. It also confirms the position of the North Coast as the area with the smallest number of modernist Muslim voters. But even here, the modernist share of votes has almost doubled, from around 23 per cent voting for Masyumi in 1955 elections to the 42 per cent garnered by Prabowo.

However, the story does not seem to end here. Ironically, it is the presence of the new *dakwah* movement that has the potential to turn West Java round. Theologically speaking, this movement presents a deepening of a puristic form of Islamic orthodoxy, one that is commonly associated with the modernist *aliran* in Indonesian socio-political life. Therefore, it is natural to assume that the movement will grow in the fertile land of West Java, where the political outlook has always been modernist. However, there is a compelling reason for why this may not be the case. It is important to be mindful that in terms of religious practices West Java continues to be a traditionalist land, dotted with *salafiyah* (traditional) *pesantren*. In the words of West Java NU activists, these *pesantren* constitute a cultural NU, albeit not structural (card-carrying) members of NU. The growing presence of movements influenced by interpretations from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East without a sufficient acculturation process has been met with varying degrees of resistance. All the *pesantren* leaders interviewed regarded these movements as "other", which may present an affront to the long-

practised Islamic creed of the West Javanese *pesantren* (Masthuro, personal communication, February 8, 2019). Like its national leadership, the West Java board of NU is at the forefront of efforts to stem the growth of new movements through various programmatic offensives. However, there have also been serious efforts to incorporate the cultural NU *pesantren* into the structural fold by a series of engagement that are meant to sensitise them to the danger that the new *dakwah* movement poses to the West Javanese traditional *pesantren* way of life (Mubarok and Yahya, personal communication, March 6, 2019).

This effort is complemented by action from the political side. The election of Uu Ruzhanul Ulum as vice-governor of West Java seemed to provide a boost for Jokowi's campaign in the modernist province. Uu ran on the ticket of Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party – PPP), an Islamic party that supported the candidacy of Jokowi in the 2014 and 2019 elections. Uu is the grandson of K.H. Choer Affandi, an alumni of the Suffah Institute and a former DI/TII commander who was considered a confidant of Kartosuwiryo. Upon receiving a pardon from the government following the cessation of hostilities, he established Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Huda in Tasikmalaya. Miftahul Huda is the largest *pesantren* in West Java, with nearly 2,000 branches all over Indonesia (Latif, personal communication, March 28, 2019). Its *pesantren* network has given it considerable vote-getting power in West Java, even during the New Order period. Uu actively supported Jokowi in the province, and in doing so seems to run counter to the political interests of the new *dakwah* movement. However, there are those who are sceptical of Uu's influence. Even the elites in Miftahul Huda questioned whom to back in this year's elections (Bachtiar, personal communication, January 26, 2019). Many also doubt the rightness of the selection of K.H. Ma'ruf Amin as Jokowi's running mate in the 2019 presidential election. Ma'ruf is regarded as lacking experience in government, and as a social-conservative he is sometimes seen as not even getting the support of the NU circles where he hails from. The selection of Ma'ruf as Jokowi's running mate has been the source of criticism from the opposition side, widely supported by the new *dakwah* movement. These sceptics appear to have been proved right given the lack of progress made by Jokowi in the province in the 2019 election.

Given the abovementioned recent developments in West Java, it will be crucial to observe future power play in the region. The last two elections indicate that West Java continues to be a conservative province in Indonesia. But, of course, the trajectory will not stop at these elections. It will continue to be shaped in the years ahead. Are we witnessing a further conservative deepening or are we looking at a juncture where the table is being turned in West Java? A continuous research enterprise to gauge the degree of conservatism in this important province is critically necessary. Being the largest province in Indonesia, developments in West Java will have a tremendous effect on Indonesia's future.

## Notes

* This is a revised version of the article published with the title "Examining the Growth of Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: The Case of West Java", *RSIS Working Paper*, No. 322 (July 19, 2019), www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/WP322_V2.pdf. The article is reproduced here with the kind permission of the publisher, RSIS Publications.

1 Even though they live in Java, generally the Sundanese refuse to be called "Javanese". The latter usually refer to people who live in Central and East Java (with the exception of Madura). The Sundanese major kingdom was the Padjadjaran, contemporary of the Majapahit in East Java. The two kingdoms went to war in the Battle of Bubat in the 14th century that has left some sense of bitterness, especially on the part of the Sundanese. While the names of Hayam Wuruk (the Majapahit King) and Gajah Mada (the Majapahit Viceroy) are commonly used as street names in major cities in Indonesia, there are no streets or buildings named after these Majapahit's notables in Bandung.

2 Since its publication, there have been a number of critiques of Geertz' typology of Javanese society Among the recent ones, see Burhani (2017). Most of the critiques refer to the *Priyayi* as a social class that does not reflect religious practices, as some *Priyayi* may be pious in religious practices and others may be just nominal Muslims..

3 Various names have been used to refer to these people. The teachers were known in pre-Islamic societies as *begawan, resi* or *ajar*"and the students as *cantrik*. After the coming of Islam to Java, the teachers became known as *kyai* and the students as *santri*. Despite the change, the Islamic references remained locally rooted as these words were not Arabic in origin. See Anderson (1972), reprinted in Anderson (1990).

4 Ben Anderson refers to the people of the *pesantren* as "the ruler's critics". See Anderson (1972): 63–67.

5 For these reasons, the adherents of this movement are interchangeably known as reformist, purist and modernist Muslims. Nowadays they are often referred to as Islamists, conservatives and even sometimes radicals.

6 In the old Indonesian (pre-1973) spelling, these elements were written as *tachjul, bid'ah* and *churafat*, popularly abbreviated as TBC. TBC is also a popular short form of tuberculosis, a common illness among Indonesians. By associating these practices with an illness, the reformists tried to point out that they were common among Indonesians and must be combatted.

7 The literal translation is "Declaration of Loyalty to the State and Leaders". This institution served as the primary state-recognised Islamic institution in West Java, established under the auspices of the Netherlands Indies colonial government.

8 There could also be a historical explanation. The conflict between the Sundanese and the Javanese that occurred during the Battle of Bubat in the 14th century and the occupation of West Java by Mataram have left a bitter aftertaste, especially among the Sundanese. The Sundanese' lack of enthusiasm of the arrival of an institution from East Java might be seen in this light.

9 On PUI's history see Persatuan Ummat Islam, "Sejarah Singkat". Accessed June 21, 2019. https://pui1952.wordpress.com/tentang-pui/.

10 From West Java, DI/TII rebellion flared up in Central Java led by Amir Fatah in April 1949, in South Sulawesi led by Kahar Muzakkar in August 1953, Daud Beureueh led the rebellion in Aceh in September 1953, and Ibnu Hajar in South Kalimantan in late 1954. In fact, at the height of the rebellion in the period leading to 1955 election, DI/TII controlled the largest area known in the history of Indonesia's regional rebellions after the PRRI/Permesta rebellion that started in 1957. On the analysis of Indonesia's regional rebellions, see Lanti (n.d.).

11 Jackson (1980): 17. In fact, the association of DI/TII with Islamist agenda and the creation of the ideology of Darul Islamism escalated only after political Islam was suppressed under the Suharto's New Order regime. See Ramakrishna (2009): 83–86.
12 On succinct categorisation of structural versus cultural NU, see Ismail (2019).
13 Note that this characterisation is held only among NU's functionaries and activists in the province. Many of *ajengan* and *santri* in the West Javanese *salafiyah pesantren* may well reject this.
14 The word came from the root word *santri* (pious Muslims). Note that the adjective "isasi" in English-influenced Indonesian means becoming, reflecting the fact that the individuals undergoing a process of transformation from being non-religious to religious. This remains true until today where the majority of the followers of the new *dakwah* movement have undergone *santrinisasi*.
15 Nurcholish Madjid is a renowned Indonesian Muslim intellectual. He was active during the late 1970s and 1980s at the heyday of Suharto's New Order regime that tended to suppress expressions of Islamic religiosity. Nurcholish was brought up in a Masyumi's family, and in late 1960s became the president of HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam – Islamic Students Union), a modernist Muslim student organisation. He then pursued his doctorate at the University of Chicago, studying under Fazlur Rahman, a prominent liberal reformer and Muslim scholar. After he returned to Indonesia, Nurcholish then wrote extensively on Islam, democracy and pluralism. At the same time, he established the Paramadina Foundation that was successful in introducing Islam among the urban middle class that had previously been nominal Muslims. Even so, Nurcholish's views are often criticised by conservative Muslims that came to the forefront of Indonesian socio-political life after Reformasi.
16 Islam Nusantara is a concept coined by traditionalist NU activists in 2015. Nusantara refers to the Indonesian references to the archipelago that Indonesia is situated, depicting the indigenousness of the Islamic interpretation. This concept was deliberately developed to counter the growth of the Islamist conservative ideology that originated in and was oriented towards the practice of Islam in the Middle East. Islam Nusantara, however, is a socio-political rather than theological construct. It does not offer a set of different theological concepts from those that have been widely practised by traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia. As such, the concept lacks elaboration, but succinct explanation of the concept can be found in NU's publications, such as NU Online (2015).
17 All election-related data is drawn from the website of the Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU – General Election Commission) at www.kpu.go.id.
18 The usage of colour codes has indeed returned to the lexicon of Indonesian politics. The green or white colour usually denotes the modernist Muslim areas, while the red colour represents the nationalist-dominated areas (Dr Bachtiar, personal communication, January 22, 2019).

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## Appendix

(See next page)

*Table 4.5* List of interviews

| *No.* | *Interviewees* | *Location and time of interviews* | *Sub-regions* | *Institutional affiliations* | *Categories* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dr Tiar Anwar Bachtiar | Sumedang, 22 January 2019 | West Java | (Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought and Civilizations/ INSIST), Jakarta | Academic | By recommendation of Dr Adian Husaini (Universitas Ibnu Khaldun Bogor) |
| 2 | K.H. Abdullah Muadz, MSc | Subang, 23 January 2019 | North Coast | Yayasan Assyifa Boarding School, Subang | Pesantren | Chairman of As Syifa al Khoeriyah Foundation |
| 3 | Kyai Muhammad Hasyim | Subang, 23 January 2019 | North Coast | Pesantren Miftahul Ulum, Subang | Pesantren | Pesantren leadership |
| 4 | H. Iman Setiawan Latief | Bandung, 24 January 2019 | West Java | Persatuan Islam (Persis) | Mass organisation | Chairman, Persis, West Java |
| 5 | K.H. Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym) | Bandung, 24 January 2019 | Central Priangan | Pesantren Daarut Tauhid, Bandung | Ulama figure | Pesantren leadership / Public figure |
| 6 | K.H. Dede Miftahudin | Bandung, 25 January 2019 | Central Priangan | Pesantren Al Basyariyah, Bandung | Pesantren | Leader of Majelis Istighootsah Nurudda'wah |
| 7 | Dr Hadiyanto Abdul Rachim | Bandung, 25 January 2019 | Central Priangan | Dewan Da'wah Islamiyah Indonesia | Mass organisation | Chairman, DDII, West Java / Unpaid lecturer |
| 8 | K.H. Umar Burhanudin | Cianjur, 30 January 2019 | West Priangan | Pesantren Attaqwa, Cianjur | Pesantren | Pesantren leadership; Chairman, the National Movement to Guard the Ulama Directives, Cianjur |

(*continued*)

*Table 4.5* (*continued*)

| *No.* | *Interviewees* | *Location and time of interviews* | *Sub-regions* | *Institutional affiliations* | *Categories* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Ustadz Subhan | Bogor, 30 January 2019 | West Priangan / Jakarta Hinterland | Pesantren Al Ihya, Bogor | Pesantren | Pesantren leadership |
| 10 | K.H. Maksum Abdurahman, Lc. | Ciamis, 31 January 2019 | East Priangan | Pesantren Nurussalam, Ciamis | Pesantren | Pesantren leader (The Al-Mukmin Network of Solo led by Ustadz Abu Bakar Baasyir) |
| 11 | Ustadz Fakhruddin | Cirebon, 2 February 2019 | East Priangan | Pesantren Al Muttaqin, Cirebon | Pesantren | Pesantren leadership |
| 12 | Ahmad Ali Nurdin, PhD | Bandung, 6 February 2019 | West Java | UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung | Academic | Academic / Nahdlatul Ulama activist |
| 13 | K.H. Rd. Anwar Sanusi | Sumedang, 7 February 2019 | Central Priangan | Pesantren Asyrofuddin, Sumedang | Pesantren | Pesantren Advisor (one of the oldest pesantren in West Java) |
| 14 | K.H. Muhammad Ismail Musa | Tangerang, 8 February 2019 | Jakarta Hinterland | Pesantren Modern Granada, Tangerang | Islamic boarding school | Pesantren leadership / Former HTI activist |
| 15 | K.H. Abdul Muis | Sukabumi, 8 February 2019 | West Priangan | Pesantren Al Masthuriyah, Sukabumi | Pesantren | Pesantren leadership / Nahdlatul Ulama activist |
| 16 | K.H. Nonop Hanapi | Ciamis, 20 February 2019 | East Priangan | Pesantren Miftahul Huda II, Ciamis | Pesantren | Chairman, Miftahul Huda II Foundation / Leader of the Longmarch 212 Action, Ciamis |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Ustadz M. Ryanto | Bandung (by correspondence) | West Java | Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia | Mass organisation | Former chairman, HTI, West Java |
| 18 | K.H. Jujun Junaedi | Bandung, 1 March 2019 | East Priangan | Pesantren Al Jauhari, Garut | Pesantren | Pesantren leadership |
| 19 | Prof. Atip Latipulhayat, S.H., LLM. | Bandung, 4 March 2019 | West Java | Universitas Padjadjaran Bandung | Mass organisation / Academicc | Academic / Persis activist, West Java |
| 20 | Kiagus Zaenal Mubarok | Bandung, 6 March 2019 | West Java | Nahdlatul Ulama / Universitas Padjadjaran | Mass organisation / Academic | Vice-Chairman, NU, West Java |
| 21 | Ahmad Syaikhu | Bandung, 7 March 2019 | Jakarta Hinterland | Partai Keadilan Sejahtera | Politician | Former Chief of Executive Board, PKS, West Java |
| 22 | Ustadz Suhada | Bandung, 7 March 2019 | West Java | Muhammadiyah / UIN Sunan Gunung Djati | Mass organisation / Academic | Chairman, Muhammadiyah, West Java |
| 23 | Ustadz Husnul Latif | Tasikmalaya, 28 March 2019 | East Priangan | Pesantren Miftahul Huda I, Tasikmalaya | Pesantren | Secretary of the Executive Board of Pesantren |

# 5 Resisting conservatism

## Muhammadiyah's experience through its social activities

*Ahmad Najib Burhani**

### Introduction

Muhammadiyah is seen as a pillar of moderate Islam in Indonesia. Observers have argued that the two major moderate Islamic organisations in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), have played important roles in stabilising democracy in the post-reform era (Pepinsky 2014; Menchik 2016). It is partly also because of Muhammadiyah that civil Islam and religious moderatism became a dominant feature in post-reform Indonesia (Hefner 2000).

Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah's recent religious discourse and reaction to events in Jakarta elsewhere in Indonesia seem to indicate that some of its members and activists are moving in a more conservative direction. Public statements from Muhammadiyah activists help to illuminate this trend, particularly on three issues: the banning of HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia),[1] controversies regarding the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on Believers of the Faith (Penghayat Kepercayaan).

This chapter provides the latest insights on the evolution of Muhammadiyah as a socio-religious organisation. It discusses the religious position of Muhammadiyah by analysing its response to the Defending Islam Action (Aksi Bela Islam) and the three religious controversies mentioned above. How has Islamic conservatism – influenced by both local and external actors – shaped ideational and socio-political changes within Muhammadiyah while contributing to the ongoing expression of identity politics in Indonesia? This chapter begins with an overview of Muhammadiyah's historically socially activist role in the provision of social services, its cultural transformation since a 1995 congress in Aceh and an analysis of its response to critical religious issues that occurred in 2017.

### Social services as the ideology of Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah is the largest modernist Islamic movement in Indonesia. It runs over 400 hospitals and other health institutions; operates 2,604

elementary schools, 1,722 middle schools, 745 high schools, 546 vocational schools, 160 *pesantren*s and 177 colleges and universities; and manages 384 orphanages across Indonesia (Burhani 2019a, 146; Burhani 2019b). In terms of membership, no exact number has been publicly announced, but it is estimated to have approximately 30 million members and supporters. Muhammadiyah is one of the oldest mass organisations in Indonesia that is still actively operating today. It was established by Ahmad Dahlan in Kauman, Yogyakarta in 1912 during the Dutch colonial period.

Scholars and analysts have applied various labels to Muhammadiyah. The most popular among them are modernist, reformist and puritan Islam (Kim 2007; Sukidi 2006; White 2004; Peacock 1978; Noer 1973). Although the organisation has been described in those terms, Muhammadiyah is fundamentally a social movement with social services as its main concern, and these social service activities have become one of its most important functions since its establishment in 1912. The social services provided by Muhammadiyah – which can be found throughout Indonesia – are mostly in the form of education, orphanages and health services.

The theological foundation for providing social services was constructed in the time of its founding father, Ahmad Dahlan (1868–1923), and has been maintained throughout its history. It is called the theology of *al-Mā`ūn* (kindness), based on the teaching of the *Qur'an* in *surah al-Mā`ūn* (Q. 107: 1–7). The story of this theology is found not only in academic books on the history of Muhammadiyah but also in movies, novels, and comics. It is said that K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was once asked by his students why he taught them the same Koranic verses every day. Dahlan responded by asking, "Have you (really) understood these verses?" The moral of the story for his students – while they understood the verses literally, they did not fully understand them because they had not put them into practice. He urged his students to go find the poorest people in the town of Yogyakarta, help them to take a bath and then feed them.

These verses have become a foundational myth of Muhammadiyah, and the theology has been translated into three main social activities carried out by the organisation: feeding, schooling and healing/treating. Feeding is implemented by establishing houses for the needy, giving them food, and establishing orphanages. Schooling is implemented by fighting illiteracy through education and publishing books or magazines. Healing is realised by establishing hospitals and clinics.

The ideology of Islamic kindness has been a cornerstone of Muhammadiyah's ideology. Most recently, important Muhammadiyah members, particularly the late Moeslim Abdurrahman, introduced a new interpretation of the theology. Abdurrahman believed that Muhammadiyah's social activities needed to be updated. In his view, simple charity was not enough because poverty was not merely a function of laziness. There are many people who work 24 hours a day and seven days a week, but they are still poor. The cause of impoverishment is actually the existence of a system of poverty that is linked to global capitalism (Boy et al. 2008). Therefore, the way to deal with

it ought to be updated to account for modern conditions. He, for instance, introduced the concept of the "new *mustadh'afin*" (the oppressed and disposed), which included labourers, peasants and fishermen. Capitalism, in this concept, has contributed to making them poor and marginalised.

Muhammadiyah accords high respect to those who devote themselves to these social services, regardless of religious differences, cultural inclination or political affiliation. This quality is exemplified in a person like Said Tuhuleley, whose name can be found on several Muhammadiyah buildings. In short, social services is an undisputed key pillar in the identity of Muhammadiyah since its inception and up until the modern era. The commitment of the organisation to social services has not changed despite internal cultural and political shifts. In terms of implementation, it has been modified a few times, but in general its importance to Muhammadiyah's identity has been continuously maintained.

## New cultural, inter-religious and political perspectives

In contrast to its social services mission, Muhammadiyah's cultural and political position is often evolving and experiencing shifts. This can be seen from the way scholars have identified and characterised the organisation's culture. Unlike Muhammadiyah's unified position on social services, culturally the organisation is more diverse and even fragmented. Based on his study of the Muhammadiyah community in Jember, Abdul Munir Mulkhan (2000) has identified four categories of Muhammadiyah members: Al-Ikhlas, Kiai Dahlan, MuNU (Muhammadiyah-NU) and MarMud (Marheinis-Muhammadiyah). Based on their study of Muhammadiyah in Eastern Indonesia, Mu'ti and Riza Ul Haq (2009) added another category called Krismuha (Kristen Muhammadiyah or Muhammadiyah Christian). In daily interactions with Muhammadiyah members, people often hear further additions such as MuSyi (Muhammadiyah Syiah), Munas (Muhammadiyah Nasionalis), and Musa (Muhammadiyah Salafi) or Mursal (Muhammadiyah Rasa Salafi or Muhammadiyah with a Salafi taste).

These labels reflect the complex cultural characterisation within Muhammadiyah, which is typically referred to merely as a modernist and reformist movement. Because of the fragmented internal composition of these various cultural strains, it has been referred to as *dzul wujuh* or having multiple faces. In other words, the organisation has many facets and cannot be boiled down to a single orientation because of the diversity of its members and regions. Nonetheless, the common denominator which holds its members together is, in the words of its longest-serving chairman A.R. Fachruddin: "*Muhammadiyah itu organisasi*" (Muhammadiyah is after all an organisation). Despite diverse internal factions, the organisation is generally unified.[2] It has been able to accommodate people of diverse orientations, and Muhammadiyah never had experienced any serious split or exodus of a significant number of people from the organisation.

The diverse and even fragmented cultural orientation of Muhammadiyah members have made it hard for the organisation to agree on a unified approach to cultural issues and religious positions. This is made harder by long-held foundational tenets of Muhammadiyah, especially its positions on *takhayul* (delusions), *bid'ah* (religious innovation without precedence in the Prophetic traditions and the *Qur'an*) and *churafat* (superstitions or irrational belief). This is typically referred to as TBC, with *slametan* tradition, *ziarah kubur* (visiting graves) and *tawassul* (using a mediator to obtain God's favour) among the examples. Although this teaching has cemented Muhammadiyah as a modernist and puritan movement. the organisation has also had a strict attitude towards matters of religious principles. In practice, this doctrine has made some members of the organisation intolerant of certain local or traditional cultures of Indonesia.

In the early twentieth century, Muhammadiyah's cultural position was perceived as progressive and in line with modernity. The effort to eradicate TBC, for instance, was perceived as being in line in with modernisation, i.e. religious rationalisation. To adjust to contextual changes, there were several programmes introduced in the context of Muhammadiyah's cultural, inter-religious and political positions. Among them was the publication of *Tafsir tematik al-Qur'an tentang hubungan sosial antarumat beragama* (thematic exegesis of the *Qur'an* on interfaith relations), the introduction of the concept of *da'wah kultural* (cultural propagation) and the adoption of the concept of *darul 'ahdi wa al-syahadah* (the abode of covenant and the space of testimony). The first two are related to cultural and inter-religious relations, while

*Table 5.1* Typology of Muhammadiyah members

| *Types of Muhammadiyah members* | *Short explanation* |
|---|---|
| Al-Ikhlas (English translation) | *Fiqh*-oriented, exclusive and conservative in their religiosity |
| Kiai Dahlan | Religiously inclusive and focusing more on social services |
| MuNU (Muhammadiyah-NU) | Culturally, they follow NU, but organisationally they are members of Muhammadiyah |
| MarMud (Marheinis-Muhammadiyah) | Nominal Muslims (*abangan*) in religiosity, but active members of Muhammadiyah |
| Krismuha (Kristen Muhammadiyah or Muhammadiyah Christian) | Christian by religious association, but working or studying in Muhammadiyah's institutions or actively involved in Muhammadiyah's activities |
| Musa (Muhammadiyah Salafi) | Salafi in religious ritual and orientation, but active members of Muhammadiyah |
| Mursal (Muhammadiyah Rasa Salafi or Muhammadiyah with a Salafi taste) | Rejecting association with Salafi, but inclined to take Salafi side on religious views |

Source: Mulkhan (2000) and author's own terminology

the third is strongly related to politics and the state-religion relationship. With these programmes and concepts, Muhammadiyah intends to have more inclusive relation with non-Muslims, revise its formerly strict relationship with traditionalist Islamic culture, have an accommodative position regarding the nation-state and make a better contribution to the country.

The process of introducing new cultural perspectives in Muhammadiyah began in 1995 with a new ruling or edict on arts (*seni*). During the 43rd Congress of Muhammadiyah in Banda Aceh in 1995, Muhammadiyah discussed the problem of the arts in Islam. One of its decisions was to declare art *mubah* or permitted – revising its previous decision which regarded works of art as *haram* or forbidden (Burhani 2016). This may appear a small move or decision, but it had significant ramifications for the cultural attitude of Muhammadiyah, as seen in the shift in Muhammadiyah's stand on cultural issues. In the 2000s, Muhammadiyah followed it up with two significant programmes related to culture and inter-religious relations, namely*da'wah kultural* and the publication of *Tafsir tematik al-Qur'an*.

These two programmes were quite revolutionary, and they shocked some members of the organisation. They were seen by some members of Muhammadiyah as directly attacking the core teaching on TBC. To be precise, because the doctrine on TBC had been held for a long time in Muhammadiyah, the concept of *da'wah kultural* was seen as inconsistent with the theological position of the organisation.[3] It is not surprising, therefore, that although the general concept of *da'wah kultural* was accepted, attitudes around its interpretation and implementation varied among members. This contradiction is illustrated by Mitsuo Nakamura (2012) in his research in Kotagede. Although Muhammadiyah members in Kotagede accepted *da'wah kultural*, when it came to cultural issues in the area, they still had largely negative responses. In the case of the Kotagede Festival, Nakamura (2012, 368) states: "Many of them only focused their attention on the matter of 'TBC', i.e. *jaelangkung* [Ouija] and *jathilan* [Javanese dance], while the matter of overall societal significance of the [festival] was not appreciated." This programme, which was implemented during the leadership of Ahmad Syafii Maarif, now seems to be neglected, if not completely forgotten.

If Muhammadiyah's attitude to culture is guided by its doctrine on TBC, its relationship with people from different religions has been strongly influenced by the concept of *lakum dīnukum wa liyadīn* (unto you your religion, and unto me my religion), less inclusive interfaith relations, based on the teaching of the *Qur'an* in *surah al-Kafirun* (Q. 109: 1–6). Scholars often assume that the guiding principle of Muhammadiyah's relationship with non-Muslims is *fastabiq al khairāt* (compete with each other in good works, Q. 5: 48). My study on this issue (Burhani 2011), however, shows that this doctrine is mostly applied by Muhammadiyah members to one another within the organisation. In terms of competition with non-Muslims, the doctrine of *lakum dīnukum wa liyadīn* is more often applied.

As mentioned by Alwi Shihab (1995), the establishment of Muhammadiyah was a response to the penetration of Christian missionaries. The response of the

organisation to the Christian missionaries was mostly copying and imitating their methods, particularly with regard to education and health services. Socially, Muhammadiyah has created a good relationship with Christians by applying the principle of *lakum dīnukum wa liyadīn*. Theologically, however, they compete with religious groups of other religions. It can be said that socially Muhammadiyah tends to be inclusive of non-Muslims, but theologically they tend to be exclusive. The publication of *Tafsir Tematik al-Qur'an* was an effort to create a better relationship with non-Muslims, including non-mainstream religious traditions, and move away from theologically confrontational dialogue to a more cooperative and collaborative dialogue. The *Tafsir*, for instance, reinterpreted the concept of *ahl al-kitab* (people of the book). This concept should be applied to Muslims' relations with not only Christianity and Judaisme but all religious traditions, including Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism (MTPPI 2000, 151).

The *Tafsir* was published after the occurrence of several inter-religious conflicts in Indonesia and was intended as a contribution by Muhammadiyah to the maintenance of inter-religious harmony. Just as with the concept of *dakwah kultural,* the publication of this *tafsir* was responded to negatively by some segments of Muhammadiyah. Some members even demanded that the organisation take the *Tafsir* out of circulation and ban members from reading it. Bowing to this demand, the leaders of Muhammadiyah finally stop publishing and circulating the book, although it did not declare the book banned or prohibit its members from reading it. One of the impacts of Muhammadiyah's position on indigenous culture and other religions can be seen in its attitude to Penghayat Kepercayaaan, discussed in the next part of this chapter.

If changing attitudes towards culture still need time to become ingrained within Muhammadiyah, the introduction of new political perspectives has received a more positive response. The concept of *dār al 'ahdi wa al-syahādah*, which was introduced at the 2015 congress, is an effort to build a new political perspective among members of Muhammadiyah. With this concept, Muhammadiyah is attempting to show its strong commitment to Indonesia and its unwavering acceptance of the nation-state. It is indirectly a refutation of the idea of a transnational Islamic caliphate as promoted by the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Taḥrīr al-Islāmī) and the temptation to create an Islamic state in Indonesia. Although conceptually this has been accepted, it seems that the perspective will require some time to be fully internalised within Muhammadiyah.[4] The response of Muhammadiyah to the banning of HTI and the Perppu No. 2 / 2017, as discussed in the next part of this chapter, tested whether this new political-theological position was genuinely held or rhetorical.

## PKI, HTI and Penghayat Kepercayaan: response from Muhammadiyah

There are some well-known disagreements between the NU and Muhammadiyah regarding calendrical determinations of the beginning of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitri (Hosen 2012). Muhammadiyah prefers to use the method of *hisab*

(calculated time of the new moon), whereas NU prefers the method of *ru'yah* (physical sighting of the moon).[5] This has been tolerated by both parties as an acceptable difference in the ways of practising religion. During the first term of Jokowi's presidency, these differences came to public attention when the government's decided to hold Santri Day (Students Day) on 22 October. The decision implicitly supported NU and essentially confined the meaning of *santri* to NU *santri* (Burhani 2017). This move seems to be an effort to persuade NU to become an ally in the fight against Islamist, transnationalist and intolerant groups. Then, during the Jakarta gubernatorial election, more leaders and members of NU supported Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, better known as Ahok, whereas in Muhammadiyah, the number of those who supported Ahok appeared to be smaller and they mainly supported his competitor, Anies Baswedan.

After the Jakarta gubernatorial election concluded with the triumph of Anies Baswedan, a few leaders of NU and Muhammadiyah continued their differences, particularly as regards the recurrent controversy of the PKI, the banning of HTI and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on Believers of the Faith. When the government issued an interim emergency law to ban HTI for being anti-Pancasila, some influential figures in Muhammadiyah opposed the Perppu, especially without judicial review of its ban.[6] Certain branches of Muhammadiyah went even further by inviting former HTI activists, like Felix Siauw, to preach in their mosques. This happened, for example, in Masjid Kauman Yogyakarta. The Muhammadiyah security force even provided protection and security for Siauw in districts where certain mass organisations threatened to disband the preaching or religious gatherings (*pengajian*) – for instance, in Sukoharjo on 17 July 2017, in Garut on 11 November 2017, and in Karanganyar on 19 November 2017.

The position taken by some members of Muhammadiyah on the issue of HTI seems to contradict the official decisions issued during the last congress in Makassar in 2015. During the congress Muhammadiyah tried to strengthen its support for the Indonesian nation-state by issuing a document called *Negara Pancasila sebagai Dār al-'Ahdi wa al-Syahādah* (Pancasila State as the Abode of Covenant and the Space of Testimony). This document declared the strong commitment of Muhammadiyah to Indonesia and its unwavering acceptance of the nation-state. It was also an indirect refutation to the utopic vision of an Islamic caliphate as promoted by the Islamic Liberation Party (*Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr al-Islāmī*) and the temptation to create an Islamic state in Indonesia.

By comparison, some influential figures in NU strongly supported the banning of HTI. In his statements, Said Agil Siradj, the NU chairman, indicated that it was NU that advised the Indonesian president, Joko Widodo, to ban HTI. Similarly, the response of NU to Perppu No. 2/2017 was also positive. After the issuance of the perppu, the NU paramilitary organisation Banser (Barisan Ansor Serbaguna, Multipurpose Force), even acted as the vanguard of Pancasila and guardian of state ideology. A number of people

from NU, such as the chairman of the Ansor Youth Movement (the youth wing of NU), Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, are well known for supporting this type of activity. Banser, for instance, threatened to halt Felix Siauw from preaching in several places because of his ideological association with the HTI.

An example of the divide between the NU and Muhammadiyah was the religious gathering in Garut where Ustadz Bachtiar Nasir (UBN) – an Indonesian Islamist ulama – was scheduled to be the main preacher. Banser allegedly threatened to disband the gathering and forbid Nasir from preaching there. However, Kokam, the Muhammadiyah's paramilitary group, and other Islamic paramilitary groups protected the event and defended Nasir.

Muhammadiyah has reinforced its defence of conservative Islamic groups with its similar position on the issue of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). This issue, a recurrent topic in September each year, can be read as a kind of retaliation against the banning of HTI. TVMU, the official television station of Muhammadiyah, and other Islamist-inclined TV channels broadcast several programmes related to the PKI. On the 30 September, TVMU and other broadcasters such as TVONE, aired the movie *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI* (the Coup of the Indonesian Communist Party on 30 September 1965) which, due to its controversial subject matter, had not been aired by Indonesia's state-owned broadcaster TVRI since 1998.[7] Public viewings of the movie in mosques, schools and offices were held by several branches of Muhammadiyah such as SMA Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. Although the PKI no longer exists in Indonesia, the imagined threat of its revival was mentioned several times.

On 7 November 2017, a few months after public viewings of the film, the Indonesian Constitutional Court decided to allow the religious groups that fall outside the six officially recognised religions to print or state their beliefs on their national identity cards, or KTP.[8] By this ruling, the court demanded the government add Penghayat Kepercayaan as a seventh official category of religion in Indonesia.

Immediately after the ruling, there were two different responses from Muhammadiyah. Abdul Mu'ti, secretary general of Muhammadiyah, supported the ruling, while the organisation's chairman was critical and even accused the Constitutional Court of having more power than God.[9] Former Muhammadiyah leader Din Syamsuddin was very active in demanding the court review its decision and even revoke it (Detik.com 2017b). He also lobbied MUI and Muhammadiyah, ordering them to reject the ruling. Eventually, Muhammadiyah reached a unanimous decision to oppose the ruling. "Without having any meeting, I think we agree to reject the ruling of MK on indigenous religions," stated Yunahar Ilyas, as quoted by TVMU.

## Possible explanations

Is there strong evidence that Muhammadiyah leaders and members are being influenced by Islamic conservatism? The most common analysis, which

explains the recent tendencies of Muhammadiyah as an increasing inclination toward conservatism or, using the term from Martin van Bruinessen (2013), a "conservative turn". This chapter has a different take. Looking back to the religious position of Muhammadiyah since its establishment on issues of inter-faith relations, the state-religion relationship and other cultural issues, there has been no major deviation in the organisation's religious practices. Muhammadiyah's position has become more conservative since the leadership of Ahmad Syafii Maarif (1998–2005), but it is better seen as a return to Muhammadiyah's historical stance.

Three different perspectives are useful: the organisation's rivalry, solidarity and pragmatic-moderatism based on rational choice theory. The first perspective sees the position of Muhammadiyah as an indication of its political rivalry with NU. Although these organisations are often acknowledged as the two main wings of Islam in Indonesia, it cannot be denied that they have always been in competition for members. The nature of their rivalry, and the different ways in which they approach certain issues, is often determined by political expediency rather than ideological or theological imperatives.

Both organisations have been competing and critiquing each other over several issues. During Jokowi's first presidential term, the two organisations clashed over Santri Day and the professorship of a few dignitaries from NU like Ma'ruf Amin and Muhaimin Iskandar. Both organisations often adopted different policies regarding the activities of the National Agency for Combating Terrorism (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, BNPT) and the special counterterrorism squad or Special Detachment 88 (Detasemen Khusus, Densus 88) (Zuhri 2017). While the leaders of NU supported the efforts of the BNPT and Densus 88 in fighting against terrorism, Muhammadiyah Youth (Pemuda Muhammadiyah) advocated for Siyono who was killed by Densus 88 for allegedly taking part in terrorist networks and activities. Further underscoring the political nature of their rivalry, during the 2014 presidential election PAN, the party strongly associated with Muhammadiyah, supported Prabowo, whereas PKB, the party of NU, supported Joko Widodo. These are examples of the antagonism between NU and Muhammadiyah. By saying this, it can be said that the religious and cultural position of NU and Muhammadiyah do not reflect their theological position. They are more a projection of political rivalry between the members of these two organisations.

The second possible perspective on Muhammadiyah's recent positions is that it was guided by Islamic solidarity rather than politics or ideology. The activities of Muhammadiyah on the issue of Aksi Bela Islam and subsequent religious events, as explained by Latief (2016), were guided by Islamic solidarity or Islamic affinity. Aksi Bela Islam was a protest movement that successfully attracted a huge number of Muslims. The proponents of this movement were able to unify a broad coalition of Muslims by arguing that Ahok had committed blasphemy, an enormously sensitive issue. Some members of Muhammadiyah and NU joined the rallies to express their solidarity

with fellow Muslims. As an ethnically Chinese Christian, Ahok represents a double minority, yet in this view anti-Ahok protesters did not necessarily represent an anti-Christian or anti-Chinese movement but were engaging in a kind of social, religious and political protectionism after feeling threatened by Ahok (Mietzner & Muhtadi 2017). This is informed by a general feeling that the government needs to do more to help Muslim communities gain confidence and reduce feelings of inferiority, particularly in the economic sector. The actions of Muhammadiyah can be framed in this way as maintaining solidarity with those feelings and that movement. In short, the movement did not reflect a conservative turn, but was more about the feeling of marginalisation, either real or imagined, and the political-economic access to the government. Religion was used and manipulated here to frame the movement and raise hatred.

## Pragmatic Islamism of Muhammadiyah

While the above explanations have their proponents and offer some useful alternate perspectives, this chapter argues that the current religiosity in Muhammadiyah can be characterised as "pragmatic" Islamism. The argument for this perspective stems from the fact that the banning of HTI, the issue of the PKI and the court decision on Penghayat Kepercayaan are three different topics and should not be grouped together. The first is related to democracy and the nation-state. The second is a seasonal issue, which is often fabricated or manipulated for political interest. The third one is an inter-faith issue pertaining to religious rights.

What binds them together and links them – which has become the pull factor for some Muslim groups to move together – is the perception of the dominance of Islam in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah, mostly its politicians, has been concerned with this dominance and intends to maintain or even strengthen and expand it by accommodating or giving more room to Muslim aspirations, indirectly restricting the growth and development of other religions, let alone Penghayat Kepercayaan, and eradicating any ideology that tries to rival it (Rais 2017). That is the reason why Muhammadiyah sided with conservative groups in these religious controversies.

Statements from Din Syamsuddin on Penghayat Kepercayaan illuminate our understanding of the domination of Islam in Indonesia. Accepting Penghayat Kepercayaan as having the same position as religion or accepting it as an official religion would pose a major threat to Islam.[10] Assuming that the number of followers of Penghayat Kepercayaan and indigenous religions in Indonesia is 12 per cent of the total population, accepting them as a religion or giving them equal religious rights would eliminate millions of potential converts.[11]

The second argument for this perspective is the fact that the cultural or religious tendency of Muhammadiyah is still second to and overshadowed by its social service commitment. With the huge number of social entrepreneurs that need to be taken care of, Muhammadiyah cannot dwell for a long time

on abstract issues such as caliphates and an Islamic state. From here, we can see that the theology of *al-Mā`ūn* (kindness) in Muhammadiyah still commands enough religious salience to prevent its members from indulging in Islamist ideas. Members of Muhammadiyah take a more realistic perspective in seeing the world and distance themselves from the utopic vision of a caliphate or viewing sharia law as the panacea for all ills plaguing Muslims.

Mass organisations like FPI and HTI do not run thousands of schools and hospitals that keep them from organising rallies or Islamist ideas. The leadership and organisation have mechanisms of self-control and has thus far avoided being torn apart by divisive issues that could jeopardise the organisation's main calling. This is the reason why the chairman of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nashir, although sometimes taking a bit of an ambiguous position, was certain on at least one thing – establishing *pusat-pusat keunggulan* or centres of excellence as a way to combat marginalisation, economic inferiority and political defeat.

It is impossible to comprehensively infer the religious position of Muhammadiyah just by looking at the above three issues. Comparing the response of Muhammadiyah on those issues and its decisions during the 2015 congress in Makassar, there are contradictions and inconsistencies. The recommendation of the congress, for instance, promoted tolerance, understanding, dialogue, science and the protection of minorities. It also introduced *Darul 'Ahdi wa al-Syahadah* as a key concept in the context of the nation-state and Pancasila.

I argue here that Muhammadiyah's religious position can be classified as "pragmatic Islamism" based on rational choice. Pragmatic Islamism is an ideology of Islamism that is down to earth and has been contextualised or guided by pragmatism. It is a form of Islamism that moves in line with social dynamics, especially when Muhammadiyah has worldly and social service tasks to be taken care of. The organisation does not live only in a discursive or utopic world. Members must collaborate with others coming from diverse religious backgrounds to maintain and fund schools and orphanages. Members also come into regular contact with individuals of various ideological backgrounds, including Islamists and liberal Muslims. It is this social interaction that makes them engage with Islamism in a practical or pragmatic way.

## Conclusion

Muhammadiyah is a religious movement with a strong emphasis on social services or, to use the term commonly employed by its members, *amal sholih* (good deeds). This is the position continuously held and maintained by the organisation throughout its history. Members of Muhammadiyah have consistently internalised this value to the point that it has become more than just trivial jargon or the brand of the organisation. It has grown to become a habitus of its members; their blood, breath, sweat and daily activities. It can be said that this is currently the main identity of Muhammadiyah and the raison d'être of its existence.

The guiding principle of Muhammadiyah is the doctrine or theology of *al-Mā'ūn* (kindness), referring to the *Qur'an* 107: 1–7 – enshrined in the teaching of its founding father, Ahmad Dahlan, to his students. This teaching has been preserved, cherished and further strengthened by instilling a tradition of high respect and even veneration to activists who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to social service activities, such as the late Said Tuhuleley.

Although the organisation's social activities are settled space, cultural activities and views in the organisation reflect diverse ideological backgrounds and positions. The old guiding principle accepted by members in relation to culture was the enmity towards TBC. This position has placed Muhammadiyah in an uneasy relationship with local cultures. There have been some internal efforts to soften this exclusivist attitude to culture, particularly promoted by progressive leaders, but progress has been slow and the impact is not yet strongly visible.

The three issues that occurred in 2017 – the banning of HTI, the controversy over the PKI and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on Penghayat Kepercayaan – fall within the cultural spectrum of Muhammadiyah's standing. They are issues on which Muhammadiyah has a shaky position, becoming easily drawn into Islamist and conservative tendencies. It is therefore not surprising to see Muhammadiyah members split into opposing groups when it comes to such delicate issues. Official statements from Muhammadiyah have tried to understand the dynamics and diversity of its members and to play within the ideal corridors of democracy and Islam.

The position of Muhammadiyah is different from that of Islamist groups such as FPI and FUI, which are guided by Islamist supremacy and an uncritically exclusive position toward different beliefs and ideologies. The theology of *al-Mā'ūn* had prevented Muhammadiyah from dwelling on mythical or abstract issues and helped insulate the organisation from Islamist inclinations and fundamentalist tendencies. It brings the members of Muhammadiyah to a more realistic way of seeing the world, where they can distance themselves from the utopic vision of a caliphate, the dream of *Shari'ah* as the Messiah that will solve every problem, or the temptation to create an Islamic state.

## Notes

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1 An organisation that has consistently promoted a caliphate system, opposed democracy and often mocked and ridiculed the existing system, and disproved of the nation-state.

2 The source of this information is a letter from Mitsuo Nakamura, the most authoritative scholar on Muhammadiyah, to the author on August 4, 2018. I reproduce his points on A.R. Fachruddin and the role of Muhammadiyah as an organisation.
3 It is this TBC that is often regarded as the cause of "backwardness" of Muslim community. To overcome, Muhammadiyah promoted the use of reason, the introduction of secular education, and modern medicine.
4 As described by Suaedy (2016), the full acceptance of *kebangsaan* and Pancasila was just introduced to the NU in the 1980s. Interestingly, this has become a new habitus in the NU. The attitude and response of the NU to Pancasila and NKRI was an implementation of that new habitus.
5 These two organisations have some differences in their religious rituals, commonly called *khilafiyah*, such as in small details of prayer; *iftitah, qunut, basmalah* before *fatihah, tahiyyat*, etc. Each group tolerates the other regarding these differences and considers the ways of the other group as acceptable.
6 Muhammadiyah's view on this perppu can be read in its Statement of Principle, namely: *Pernyataan Sikap Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah* No. 364/PER/I.0/A/2017 tentang "Pro-Kontra Seputar Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang (Perppu) Nomor 2 Tahun 2017 dan Masalah Keberadaan Negara Pancasila", signed by Haedar Nashir, chairman of Muhammadiyah, and Abdul Mu'ti, general secretary, on 2 August 2017.
7 Prior to that year, it was mandatory for TVRI to broadcast this movie on 30 September each year.
8 The followers of Penghayat Kepercayaan decreased dramatically after the 1965 tragedy because of the their alleged association with the PKI.
9 Mu'ti's statement can be found at Republika Online (2017a). Nashir's statement can be found at Hidayatullah.com (2017).
10 Syamsuddin explains that the ruling gives disadvantage or detriment for Indonesian Muslims, but he does not explain in detailing the meaning of "merugikan umat Islam" (KBR.id 2017).
11 In a hearing at the Constitutional Court, Engkus Ruswana from MLKI (Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa Indonesia), the organising body for the followers of Penghayat Kepercayaan, claimed that the total number of followers of Penghayat Kepercayaan is around 12 million. This number seems improbably large, but some religious leaders based their rejection of the decision of the Constitutional Court on this claim (Detik.com 2017a). Different from the above claim, the number of Indonesian citizens who registered as followers of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in their KTP (Identity Card) by June 2017 is only 138,791 people. See Republika Online (2017b).

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# 6 Challenging moderate Islam in Indonesia

## NU Garis Lurus and its construction of the "authentic" NU online

*Asep M. Iqbal*

### Introduction

There has been much scholarship on Indonesian politics highlighting the internal dynamics, tensions and factionalism in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia. These include works by Marcus Mietzner (2009), Robin Bush (2009), Suzaina Kadir (2000), and Martin van Bruinessen (1991). More recent work includes commentaries and short articles reporting on the emergence of hardliners against the moderate legacy of Abdurrahman Wahid and the current NU chairman, Said Aqil Siradj and his allies. These especially highlight the strong opposition from within by a hardline faction of NU that calls itself "NU Garis Lurus" (the straight path). These include articles by Alexander Arifianto (2017; 2018), Ahmad Syarif Syechbubakr (2018) and Aziz Anwar Fachrudin (2019).

Undoubtedly, those works provide us with insights for understanding the phenomenon of internal tensions in the NU and the struggle against the legacy of Abdurrahman Wahid, who served as NU chairman for three terms (1984–1999), and his allies – including Said Aqil Siradj, who has been NU chairman since 2010. However, to the best of my knowledge, what is missing from the existing body of literature is an analysis of how this opposition mobilises internet based-new media to promote its agenda in its attempt to pursue its socio-religious and political goals, particularly those of Islamism. Even the often cited work edited by van Bruinessen (2013) that warns about the coming of a 'conservative turn' in Indonesian Islam in recent years does not address the rise of Islamism from within NU, let alone the issue of how young NU clerics harness internet-based new media to promote their views and pursue their goals.

This chapter attempts to fill this gap by conducting a preliminary analysis of internet use by the proponents of NU Garis Lurus and looking at how they challenge the dominant moderate ideological outlook adopted by the current leadership of NU. Using framing process theory as a theoretical framework, I will describe how the proponents of NU Garis Lurus use the internet to construct and promote their ideology of the "authentic" NU

online in their struggle against the current NU chairman and his allies on the NU executive board.

In doing so, this article asks the following questions. How does NU Garis Lurus use its online presence to construct an ideology of the "authentic" NU? And what are the implications of this web use for NU Garis Lurus and NU in general? This chapter argues that the internet has provided the proponents of NU Garis Lurus with a new, important resource to expose the Indonesian public to the promotion of its ideology of the "authentic" NU and challenge the dominant NU ideology of moderate Islam promoted by current NU leadership.

Data for this study was collected through online investigation that involved crawling the web (Garrido & Halavais 2003) for NU Garis Lurus websites using search engines (mainly Google) and the main keyword "NU Garis Lurus" and collecting materials from the chosen websites for themes and topics related to the research questions. This was used primarily to collect information about how proponents of NU Garis Lurus use the internet to construct their ideology of the "authentic" NU in their struggle against current NU leadership. The website www.nugarislurus.com was mainly selected for analysis in this chapter. Relevant collected data include web articles that were analysed for categories, topics, and arguments in accordance with the research questions. The method involved textual analysis of the collected data to uncover how the proponents of NU Garis Lurus used online resources to construct their ideology for a wider audience.

Drawing on the framing process theory (Benford & Snow 2000; Snow & Benford 1988), this chapter examines the extent to which the proponents of NU Garis Lurus used websites to construct the ideology of the "authentic" NU. It does this by identifying diagnostic (what the problem is and who is responsible for the problem), prognostic (how to address the problem) and motivational (why the problem should be addressed) framing tasks in regard to ideational views and beliefs of NU Garis Lurus. Oliver and Johnston (2000), for example, have argued for the use of the framing concept in the analysis of ideology. They suggest that ideology is a system of beliefs that underlies framed events and views, whereas a frame represents ideological content put into practice in attempts to interpret an event. When extended to media texts, the concept of frames helps explain the integration of factors related to discourse, ideology and material power (Budarick & King 2008). It can be used to investigate the way journalists and reporters interpret an event and frame it discursively in the media product (Gitlin 1980 in Budarick & King 2008).

In the context of the internet use by NU Garis Lurus, the group's main website (www.nugarislurus.com) provides texts which can be analysed to understand the framing of their religious ideology. Articles and postings selected from the NU Garis Lurus website were analysed in order to identify how proponents of NU Garis Lurus used the web for ideological construction and promotion. These were selected based on whether they contained content

dealing with the deviation from and calling for an "authentic" NU, which refers to the construct of NU Garis Lurus as a religious ideology. This will reveal the extent to which the proponents of NU Garis Lurus mobilise their website as an important resource to construct and promote their religious ideology to a wider audience and gain support for their agenda.

In what follows, this article provides basic information about NU Garis Lurus including its main proponents, organisational structure and main ideas. Then, it describes the findings of how the activists of NU Garis Lurus mobilised web resources to construct their ideology of the "authentic" NU. The impact of this web use is then discussed. Finally, the article summarises its findings and its possible contribution to the related discourse.

## NU Garis Lurus: emergence, proponents and views

NU Garis Lurus was relatively unknown to the Indonesian public before 2015. In a broader context, freedom of expression and association, which was opened up after the fall of Suharto's New Order and the coming of the reform era in 1998, provided the proponents of NU Garis Lurus, as well as other social, religious and political groups and Indonesian society in general, with opportunities to freely express their views and pursue their goals. However, it was the Nahdlatul Ulama National Congress in 2015 held in Jombang, East Java, that helped NU Garis Lurus gain popularity, at least among certain sections of NU members and sympathisers and particular groups of netizens.

NU Garis Lurus started to be publicly known at the congress when one of its main proponents, Idrus Ramli, ran for the NU chairmanship and strongly criticised both the leadership of incumbent chairman Said Aqil Siradj and his ideas, which it was argued were in contradiction with NU's original teachings such as the principle of Islam Nusantara (Indonesia's moderate brand of Islam). Though Ramli failed in his election bid, NU Garis Lurus became known as representing new religious leaders who challenged the views and policies of the NU central executive board led by Said Aqil Siradj. Its rise indicates internal divisions, which are not uncommon in the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia due to the diverse background of its constituents and its decentralised structure in which NU Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and informal religious leaders (*kyai*) operate independently from the NU central board.

The rise of NU Garis Lurus can be traced back to its leading proponents, who are often young, attractive and educated NU clerics. Many of these young clerics gained their education in traditional Islamic learning institutions in the Middle East or hold important positions in the NU branch offices as well as in *pesantren*. These backgrounds have helped them gain the confidence to provide an alternative voice to that of the NU national central board and attract support from certain groups of NU followers and sympathisers.

For example, Luthfi Bashori (born in 1965) went to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, to study at Ma'had of Sayyid Muhammad Alwi al-Maliki after he finished his grade school and *pesantren* studies in Malang, East Java. He is now the director of Pesantren Ribath Al Murtadla Al Islami and Pesantren Ilmu Alquran Singosari and the head of Law and Fatwa Commission of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) branch in Malang, East Java. Bashori is known as an Islamic preacher who is actively involved in some organisations that fight against what are perceived as erroneous ideas and groups such as Shi'ism, Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network) and local beliefs.

Another prominent figure of NU Garis Lurus is Idrus Ramli (born in 1975). His schooling took place at Pesantren Sidogiri, Pasuruan, East Java.[1] He had teaching experience in some *pesantren* in Java and South Kalimantan and was involved in publishing magazines about Ahlussunnah waljama'ah (Aswaja), including *Majalah Milenia* ASWAJA by the NU branch in Kencong, Jember, East Java. His NU organisational experience includes his position as president of the consultative board of NU's Kencong branch and membership of the advisory council of NU's East Java region.[2] In his sermons and speeches he often propagates anti-Shiite and Wahhabist thinking and is critical of the ideas of Said Aqil Siradj. As mentioned above, he challenged the incumbent Said Aqil Siradj for the NU chairmanship in Jombang, but failed to gain significant votes.

Yahya Zainul Maarif (born 1973), also known as Buya Yahya, is another important cleric in the NU Garis Lurus movement. Yahya completed grade school in Blitar, East Java, and went to Pesantren Darullughal Wadda'wah in Bangil, East Java, to pursue his traditional Islamic learning. He gained his advanced Islamic education from Al-Ahgaff University in Yemen. Yahya founded the Al Bahjah Institute of Islamic Da'wa Development in Cirebon, West Java, which operates Islamic boarding schools from elementary to high school level and runs businesses such as minimarket stores.[3]

Perhaps the most famous cleric affiliated to NU Garis Lurus is Abdul Somad Batubara (born 1977) of Riau, who is popularly known as Ustadz Abdul Somad or UAS. First well known from his involvement in rallies against Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (Ahok), the former Jakarta governor, in 2016, Somad is one of the most influential popular Islamic preachers (da'i) in contemporary Indonesia. He obtained his bachelor degree in Islamic studies from Al-Azhar University, Egypt, his master's degree from Dar El Hadith El Hassania, Morocco, and in 2019 his doctoral degree from Omdurman Islamic University, Sudan. In addition to preaching, Somad is a lecturer of Arabic and other subjects in Islamic studies at some Islamic colleges and universities in Riau. He holds positions in some Islamic organisations – such as secretary of Lembaga Bahtsul Masa'il (Institute of Islamic Studies Issues), the NU branch of Riau – and is a member of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) in Riau.[4]

This gives the impression that NU Garis Lurus is a loose grouping of young NU clerics who challenge the leadership of the current NU chairman and his allies as well as their ideas, which NU Garis Lurus considers a

deviation from the original teachings of NU founders like Hasyim Asy'ari. However, as seen on their website, NU Garis Lurus does have a kind of central headquarters called *pengurus pusat markaz besar* (MABES), with Luthfi Bashori as supreme leader (*imam besar*), Buya Yahya as general president (*rais 'am*) and Idrus Ramli as general chairman (*ketua umum*).

The main page of the NU Garis Lurus website says that its mission is as follows: "NU Garis Lurus is an effort to return NU followers to the pure teachings of KH Hasyim Asy'ari, which are Sunni, Shafiite, anti-secularism, anti-pluralism and anti-liberalism."[5]

As seen from its logo, the name of NU Garis Lurus itself reflects its proponents' self-claim that they are on the right path NU, the followers of the true NU as outlined by the NU founding fathers, and accuse others of violating the original teachings of NU. NU Garis Lurus claims that Said Aqil Siradj and his allies have corrupted the original teachings of Hasyim Asy'ari due to Siradj's inclination toward Shi'ism, liberalism and pluralism, as well as his inclusive attitude and closeness to non-Muslims like Christians and minority groups such as Chinese communities. They also strongly criticise the notion of *Islam Nusantara* promoted by Siradj and his faction as a new 'organisational ideology' during and after the NU National Congress in 2015. This narrow interpretation of Islamic teachings has led NU Garis Lurus activists to try to topple Siradj from power.

This internal division is not just political competition for NU leadership but more importantly an ideological difference between a faction that wants to retain a moderate outlook for NU and another faction that wants to bring the organisation towards a more conservative stance. In response to the rising profile of NU Garis Lurus, Said Aqil Siradj and his NU national executive board often claim that the movement is a fringe minority group within NU that does not represent the organisation. However, it would be a mistake for the NU national leadership to continue ignoring the growing popularity of NU Garis Lurus given its proponents' ability to attract followers through their popular preaching activities and harnessing of important new internet-based resources such as websites and social media.

What is interesting about the NU Garis Lurus movement is its presence on the internet and its awareness of the importance of the internet as a tool to disseminate ideas and attract followers. This is clearly seen in the group's main website, www.nugarislurus.com. Moreover, the leading figures have their personal websites and social media accounts, which attract large numbers of followers.[6]

## Deviation from the "authentic" NU: a diagnostic framing

In their pursuit of the goal of creating the "authentic' NU, NU Garis Lurus activists have been involved in identifying the problems facing NU and their causes. They have attempted to answer the questions "What is wrong with NU?" and "Who is responsible for the problems facing NU?"

This constitutes a diagnostic framing. It is a process in which social movement activists identify and describe an event, an idea, an aspect of social-political life or a system of government as problematic and in need of change or solutions. After diagnosing the problems, the activists move to another framing task: attributing blame to those who are believed to be responsible for the rise of the diagnosed problems (Benford & Snow 2000).

Accordingly, the ideology of NU Garis Lurus is based on their diagnosis that there are certain social, political, religious and economic problems facing NU as a whole. They then assert that the cause of these problems is that NU and its leadership has deviated from the original ideology of the NU founders.

## What is wrong with NU?

As mentioned before, NU Garis Lurus believes the problems start with the leadership. They believe that an ideology that contradicts *aswaja*, the official NU religious ideology, has started to contaminate NU from within.[7] In particular, they are concerned that the leadership is too willing to embrace liberal and pro-Shi'ite tendencies. They dedicated special pages of the website to uncovering and criticising these tendencies in the executive leadership, and this is reflected in the group's catchphrase: "Bringing NU citizens back to the pure teachings of KH Hasyim Asy'ari, which are Sunni-Syafi'ite and non-sepilis (secularism, pluralism and liberalism)."

The proponents of NU Garis Lurus further diagnosed that the liberal tendency within NU can be clearly seen in the 'liberalisation' of Islam in some NU *pesantren*, which are regarded as agents of liberalism in Indonesia. These include Pesantren Ciganjur of Abdurrahman Wahid in Jakarta, Pesantren Budaya Ilmu Giri of Nasruddin Anshoriy in Yogyakarta, Pesantren of Darut Tauhid of Husein Muhammad in Cirebon, Pesantren Roudlotul Thalibin of Musthafa Bisri in Rembang, and Pesantren Al Qodir in Yogyakarta.[8] This liberalisation was even believed to have infiltrated Lembaga Bahsul Masail, an official discussion forum among NU intellectuals and *ulama*.[9] They also warned that *Nahdliyyin tulen* (true NU followers) must avoid Facebook fan pages suspected of propagating liberalism in Indonesia[10] such as Kongkow Bareng Gus Dur,[11] Muslim Media News,[12] and Kumpulan Karomah Abdul Qodir Jailani.[13]

More evidence of this increasing liberalism is the NU executive leadership's view of Islamic leaders – NU officially takes the moderate view that any Indonesian citizen is entitled to run for elected office. NU Garis Lurus take the more conservative stance that Muslim leaders should govern Muslim-majority populations, a stance which placed them at odds with the official NU position during the protests against and trial of former Jakarta governor Ahok on blasphemy charges in 2016 and 2017. NU Garis Lurus condemned the NU executive board for their support of Ahok and also for their ties with Harry Tanoe, a Christian media mogul and chairman of the Perindo political

party.[14] NU Garis Lurus regarded anyone who would support Ahok and his non-Muslim leadership, or who would make alliance with non-Muslims, as persons of weak faith, and even *kafir* (apostate).[15] They argued on these grounds that NU members should not follow the direction of the current leadership.[16]

NU Garis Lurus have also differentiated themselves on the issues of an Islamic state and the enactment of Islamic law. They particularly refer to the statement by NU chairman Said Aqil Siradj before PDI-P (Democratic Party of Struggle) cadres that the Prophet Muhammad did not establish an Islamic state, but an Islamic civilization.[17] In opposition to this, NU Garis Lurus published an article by Muhammad Najih MZ[18] arguing that it is a religious obligation to set up an Islamic state (*daulah islamiyah*).[19] Idrus Ramli[20] also stated:

> In this sacred month of Ramadan, everyone should be careful how to act and speak correctly otherwise they will lose the divine reward of their Ramadan fasting. For example, a leading figure (Said Aqil Siradj) said: "The Prophet Muhammad never proclaimed an Islamic state." He stated this before *abangan* people who truly show objection with any Islamic-based things in this beloved country Indonesia. Of course, his statement cannot be accepted.[21]

According to NU Garis Lurus activists, the idea of a secular state promoted by NU leadership has resulted in the spread of the idea that it is not a religious obligation to formally enact Islamic law in Indonesia. Citing another prominent NU Garis Lurus leader, Luthfi Basori, the NU Garis Lurus website states that the rejection of Islamic law is a form of rejection of Islam and may make a Muslim an apostate. The site says:

> These days, as liberalism and secularism are becoming deeply rooted, not only non-Muslims show anti-enactment of Islamic law, but also Muslims. What follows is the explanation on the danger of refuting the implementation of Islamic law by the Great Leader of NU Garis Lurus, K.H. Luthfi Bashori in his official website, pejuangislam.com … "Observing Islamic law is an obligation for all Muslim individuals. Islamic law consists of all of God and His Messengers' rules and decisions which are made for all believers. If someone has declared that he is a true Muslim, but he or she is unwilling to implement Islamic law, then he or she is a liar".[22]

Furthermore, NU Garis Lurus proponents diagnosed that the deviation from "authentic" NU was indicated by the leadership's support and sympathy for Shi'ism. They believe that the contemporary NU differs from that of the past because some of its *ulama* have attempted to make NU open to different ideas and people with different backgrounds. Again, they cited Salahuddin Wahid:

> The current NU is different from the one in the past. There is a *kyai* in Cirebon who stated that Shi'ism is part of NU. This is not true. We are not the enemies of Shi'ism. But, to say that Shi'ism is part of NU is not right. So, we believe that he has amended what has been the standard belief for more than a 100 years. NU has been made open, whereas it is not like that.[23]

Therefore, they use their website to reject any ideas and events aimed at promoting Shi'ism among NU followers and Indonesia in general. For example, they posted a demonstration organised by NU *pesantren* and Ansor (NU's militia wing) in Bondowoso, East Java, against an allegedly Shi'iite festival in Bondowoso known as Milad Fatimah.[24] They argued that Shi'ism, just like liberalism and Wahhabism, is an error because it deviates from the mainstream Sunni Islam (*ahl al sunnah waljama'ah*).[25] Idrus Ramli in particular considers Shi'ites to have gone further astray than Wahhabites.[26]

## Who is responsible?

The next stage of diagnostic framing is finding the causes of the identified problems. In this case, NU Garis Lurus activists have attempted to answer the question of what or who is responsible for the problems with NU. To do this, they developed an inward-looking approach to answering the question. Instead of pointing their fingers at external powers, they referred to internal factors. In this context, they used their website to point fingers at the current general chairman of NU, Said Aqil Siradj, as the man most responsible for the problems experienced by NU. They believe that Siradj has moved NU away from the "authentic" teachings of NU as outlined by its founding fathers, and cite as evidence his liberal views discussed above.

On their website, NU Garis Lurus activists have characterised Siradj as a man who is destroying NU from within because he is a deviant Islamic leaders who is allowing NU to be infiltrated by communists.[27] The website has referred to him as "a dumb professor", "collaborator of those in power", "disobedient of NU *rais 'amm* (general president of consultative body)", and "liar".[28] Moreover, NU Garis Lurus activists have accused Siradj of misunderstanding the teaching of *ulama* in the past such as Ibn Taymiyyah, which has led to erroneous thinking, and consider that he is apostate due to his liberal ideas.[29]

Furthermore, through their website the proponents of NU Garis Lurus blame other prominent NU figures. They have similarly been accused of destroying NU from within due to their liberal ideas and their support of religious minority groups like the Shi'ites. Figures include Abdurrahman Wahid, Quraish Shihab of UIN Jakarta, Husein Muhammad of Cirebon Darut Tauhid Pesantren, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla of Jaringan Islam Liberal, Gus Nuril of Semarang Multi Agama Soko Tunggal Pesantren, and Nadirsyah Hosen of PCINU Australia-New Zealand.[30]

## Back to the "authentic" NU of the founding fathers: a prognostic framing

The above diagnostic framing alone is not enough for a comprehensive analysis of problems facing contemporary NU as it merely diagnoses the problem and does not provide a solution and plan of action. Therefore, NU Garis Lurus activists have moved on to the next framing task, prognostic framing, in which they advance some potential solutions to the problems they have articulated (Benford & Snow 2000).

The leaders of NU Garis Lurus are particularly committed to using its website to save NU from the internal destructive factors described above. Through this website they offer a simple but firm prognostic answer to the above-identified problems within NU: return to the "authentic" NU, as formulated by its founding fathers. They regard this call for a return to the original teachings of NU as their contribution to NU, which will save it from destruction.[31]

They intend to realise this by purifying NU of any "non-NU" ideologies that have contaminated the organisation from within. This is clearly stated as follows:

> In terms of religious thought, the community of NU Garis Lurus strongly rejects any forms of disbeliefs, apostasy, and divergence from the teachings of *aswaja* such as Shi'ism, liberalism and Salafism-Wahhabism.[32]

To put this into practice, the website has particularly promoted fighting against the ideas of Said Aqil Siradj. They have asked NU followers to reject Siradj's ideas by posting a book – published by Sidogiri Pesantren of Pasuruan, East Java – that strongly criticises his ideas. Praising the book, NU Garis Lurus activists said:

> After refuting Quraish Shihab some years ago, now Pondok Pesantren Sidogiri of Pasuruan is back with its new work that strongly refutes the thought of K.H. Said Aqil Siraj. Although it is part of the larger NU family, Pesantren Sidogiri dares to blatantly criticise the NU general chairman. The 200-page book is easy to read, its analysis is deep, its arguments are sharp, and it is able to answer many issues such as religious pluralism, liberal Islam, *mu'tazili* and Shi'ite influences, and others.[33]

On their website, NU Garis Lurus activists strongly reject not only the views of the chairman but also other like-minded NU figures like Nadirsyah Hosen of NU Special Branch of Australia-New Zealand and Husein Muhammad of Darut Tauhid Pesantren in Cirebon.[34] They regard Hosen's article on the permissibility of appointing a non-Muslim leader as "raw and a piece of

cake" and accused him of lacking understanding of the NU learning tradition of *qiyas* (a deductive analogy in Islamic jurisprudence).[35]

Furthermore, through their website, in order to purify NU of non-NU ideologies, the Garis Lurus proponents talked of toppling Siradj from his office and posted articles that called for him to be ousted from his current position of general chairman. They quoted a joint statement by NU *ulama* in Batang, Central Java that asked Siradj to step down:

> [We] demand K.H. Said Aqil Siraj resign from his position as the NU general chairman because he was not elected in accordance with the organisation's rules and through scientific investigation he is proven to have corrupted the teachings of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah al Nahdliyyah. [We also] demand the NU central board must be cleared of any PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), liberal and Shi'ite influences.[36]

Referring to the national meeting of NU *ulama* in Surabaya, East Java, after the national anti-Ahok rallies in the end of 2016, NU Garis Lurus activists again emphasised a call for toppling Siradj. They wrote:

> Hundreds of NU consultative board members and *ulama* around East Java attended the Halaqah and Silaturahmi Syuriah PBNU with the *ulama* of *pesantren* and the NU consultative boards of East Java in Surabaya … . In that meeting, the *ulama* strongly criticised the NU central board; they even demanded an evaluation of it.[37]

The same call was also directed at some NU *ulama* regarded as supporters of Siradj. These include Ahmad Ishomuddin, Masdar Farid Mas'udi and Sa'dullah Affandy.[38] Citing Sholahuddin Wahid, who is referred to as "the grandchild of the NU founder" instead of as Abdurrahman Wahid's younger brother, NU Garis Lurus had this to say about sanctioning the aforementioned *ulamas*:

> The grandchild of NU founder, K.H. Shalahuddin Wahid, who is often called Gus Sholah, asked two NU cadres who became witnesses in the Ahok case to be given punishment … . The NU leader K.H. Shalahuddin Wahid regretted that Ahmad Ishomuddin and Sa'dullah Affandy were witnesses for Ahok. "I have something to tell you. I have read in the papers a list of witnesses for Ahok. I saw Ishomuddin and Sa'dullah were on the list. This is not right according to the decision NU made in its national conference [about rejecting non-Muslim leadership]. The general chairman of NU's consultative board supported this. NU activists should not hold different opinions. It is not healthy."[39]

Finally, to return to an "authentic" NU in order to solve the problems facing the contemporary NU, NU Garis Lurus activists advocated reviving the

teachings of the NU founder, Hasyim Asy'ari. They believe this will return NU followers to the organisation's original ideals by bringing back the *aqidah aswaja* (the theology of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah*) as prescribed by the NU's originators. The importance that NU Garis Lurus ascribes to this task can be inferred from the mission statement on their website: "NU Garis Lurus is an attempt to bring NU members back to the pure teachings of Hasyim Asy'ari, which are *Sunni-Syafi'i* and non-sepilis (secularism, pluralism and liberalism)".[40]

After identifying this return to the pure teachings of Hasyim Asy'ari as the best solution to save NU and solve the problems it is facing, NU Garis Lurus activists mobilised their website as a resource to provide further information about the "authentic" NU. First, they defined the "authentic" NU as being based on the Islamic theological school of *aswaja* (*ahl al sunnah wa aljama'ah). Aswaja* is a way of following the Islamic principles (*aqidah*) of the Ash'arites, a theological school founded by Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari (874–936), and the Maturidites, established by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (853–944), the Islamic law (*fiqh*) of Shafi'ites, and the Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*) of Junaid al-Bagdadi (830–910) and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111). They assert that anyone who adheres to and promotes theologies, Islamic laws and mystical ideas that contradict the above theologies as advocated by NU's founder should be regarded as 'NU destroyers' and must be rejected.[41] To support this argument, NU Garis Lurus activists posted the original work of Hasyim Asy'ari*, Risalah Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah,* which can be downloaded from Google PlayStore.[42]

NU Garis Lurus also posted the following guidance on the website, to back up the aforementioned claims. First, that the works of Hasyim Asy'ari should be used in the recruitment process of NU members at all levels and in all institutions. Second, that prospective leaders of NU must demonstrate they have embraced the Islamic theology, law and mysticism of *ahl al sunnah wa al jama'ah* and are not Wahhabites, Shi'ites or liberals. Third, that empowering the NU central consultative body (*syuriyyah*) is necessary in order to have more power over the NU central executive board, including a veto right to dismiss policies considered to bring NU into disrepute. Lastly, that any NU board members considered to have disgraced the teachings of *ahl al sunnah wa al jama'ah* must be given a warning in writing and publicly and be deposed from their leadership positions if they repeat their mistakes.[43]

In their attempt to revive the "authentic" NU, NU Garis Lurus activists used their website to further explain the 'pure teachings' of Hasyim Asy'ari on several issues. This was clearly meant to refute liberal views believed to contradict those of the NU founder, especially those views which were promoted by Said Aqil Siradj and other like-minded NU figures. For example, countering Siradj's view on growing beards and wearing *jubah* (an Arabic dress), they published articles emphasising that growing a beard and wearing *jubah* are in line with the teachings of Hasyim Asy'ari and other NU founders

and wearing a European style of dress like trousers can be in contradiction of their teachings. To support this, NU Garis Lurus activists posted an old picture of Hasyim Asy'ari in *jubah* and turban and with a long beard, accompanied by a religious edict from the NU general assembly in 1927 about these issues.[44] Luthfi Rochman, a national commander of NU Garis Lurus, condemned those who view the wearing of *jubah* as an Arabic tradition and a dress style of Arabian disbelievers; he even called them *dajjal* (great satan).[45]

The explanation of the 'pure teachings" of NU founders can also seen in NU Garis Lurus' anti-Shi'ite attitude. According to NU Garis Lurus activists, the NU founder Hasyim Asy'ari regarded Shi'ites as a deviant faction from Islam and one that must be rejected. They posted a street rally against Shi'ites in Bondowoso, East Java, allegedly attended by thousands of *santri* from *pesantren* in the city. They quoted the rally coordinator, Muhammad Hasan Abd Muiz of Pesantren Sayyid Muhammad Al Maliki, who said:

> Today, there are more than 3,500 *santri* from various *pesantren* rallied against Shi'ism with us. We do this based on the *fatwa* issued by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari (the founder of NU) and to guard the united country of Indonesia. We refute Shi'ism.[46]

Moreover, the attempt to promote the 'true teachings of the NU founder' is indicated by their use of the website to explain their view of Islamic law. Contrary to liberal Muslims' view of Islamic law, NU Garis Lurus believes that Islamic law must be enacted and formalised in the national system of law, including in the form of regional decrees. They argue that this is in accordance with the *resolusi jihad* (jihad resolution) of Hasyim Asy'ari and the objective of NU as formulated by NU founding fathers in the Constitution of NU, Chapter 2, Verse 2, namely "to fulfill the enactment of *Shari'ah* Islam according to the guidance of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah".[47] Therefore, it is obligatory for NU members to implement Islamic law within Indonesian's system of law. They quoted the chief imam of NU Garis Lurus, Luthfi Basori:

> It should be clear for NU followers whether they are members of the NU executive or consultative boards or ordinary members that it is our obligation to fight for the formalisation of Islamic law within the Indonesian system of law as mandated in the NU constitution.[48]

## Fight for Islam: a motivational framing

NU Garis Lurus activists have conducted two important framing tasks – diagnostic and prognostic – in their attempt to construct the ideology of the "authentic" NU as described above. However, these framing tasks alone are not enough to mobilise NU Garis Lurus' supporters and sympathisers – that requires a specialised effort to mobilise support behind these ideas. In other words, the challenge for NU Garis Lurus activists now is driving their

supporters and sympathisers into collective action in order to achieve the group's goals. Here lies the importance of the third framing task, which is conceptualised as 'motivational framing'. This framing task establishes "a call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive" (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 617). It particularly involves the construction of "vocabularies of motive" by which supporters, sympathisers or by-standers are instigated to move and overcome fear or risk associated with collective action (Snow & Byrd 2007, p. 128).

My examination of the NU Garis Lurus website revealed how the group has utilised their website to construct vocabularies of motive aimed at activating their supporters or potential supporters and bringing them to the point of collective action and the realisation of their goals. On the website, NU Garis Lurus activists framed their call to 'return to the authentic NU' as prescribed by Hasyim Asy'ari and other NU founders in the following vocabularies of motive.

### *"The Islamic defenders are the lucky ones"*

In order to motivate their followers, NU Garis Lurus developed the idea that their movement is a struggle to defend NU and Islam from errors, deviance and enemies who will always attempt to destroy NU and Islam. They believe that those who stand up for the "authentic" NU and Islam are not large in number – rather they are a small number of fighters who are usually ignored by the majority. In this way Garis Lurus can frame the struggle as a chosen group fighting against the tyranny of the majority, and call this group of defenders of "authentic" NU the lucky ones, as predicted by the Prophet Muhammad. The NU Garis Lurus website contained the following quote from *Imam Besar* Luthfi Bashori:

> It is a hard struggle for a group of people who fight for maintaining the purity of Islam against ideas and behaviour from outside Islam. This group who embrace the purification of Islamic law and practice will be alienated by society, be accused of doing something weird, and even be intimidated through ways that put their lives at risk. However, before Allah, this small group is the one that will gain honour and respect as it is a group of fighters of God. The Prophet Muhammad said: "The alienated group is the lucky one because it stands up for Islam".[49]

Through this narrative, NU Garis Lurus activists give theological legitimacy to their struggle against the NU national leadership. Referring to the words of the Prophet Muhammad, they claim to be the chosen group that fights for the true Islam. By creating this framing, the NU Garis Lurus is attempting to motivate sympathisers and by-standers to join their cause of purifying NU of those who have corrupted the original teachings of the NU founding father Hasyim Asy'ari.

### *"Great* ulama *endorse the NU Garis Lurus"*

To further motivate readers to engage with their mission, the activists of NU Garis Lurus have attempted to develop positive images of their movement on the website by posting articles and news about *ulama* who support NU Garis Lurus. They aim to provide legitimacy for their movement by showing that NU Garis Lurus is not alone, but is supported and endorsed by NU religious authorities (*ulama*). They posted that NU Garis Lurus has support from great Bantenese *ulama* like Ahmad Qurthubi Jaelani of Pesantren Assalafiyah Alfutuhiyah, who is proud of the movement's activists and *ulama.* Posting a picture of Jaelani together with Luthfi Basori, they quoted Jaelani as saying:

> [I am proud of and support NU Garis Lurus because] the movement is filled by *ulama* and fighters who are fully committed to *da'wah* in the right way, following the teachings of Mbah Hasyim Asy'ari (the NU founder) and other NU founding fathers.[50]

Support from other prominent *ulama* showed up in an article stating that Ibnu Hajar Al Makky (a former student of Sayyid Muhammad Alawi Al Maliki, a respected Islamic scholar in Saudi Arabia whom many NU members study and seek for blessings) was grateful for the rise of NU Garis Lurus and admired it for to its committed fight against evil. The NU Garis Lurus website stated:

> Again, the phenomenon of NU Garis Lurus gains a positive response from K.H. Ibnu Hajar Al Makky, a disciple of Sayyid Muhammad Alawi Al Maliki. Through his Facebook account, he gave a long response and was grateful to God for the existence of NU Garis Lurus. [He said]: "I am grateful for the emergence of NU Garis Lurus. At least, the presence of the NU Garis Lurus activists and *ulama* has made those who deviate from Islamic law feel that they are being watched by tough people like them".[51]

This support comes not only from local *ulama* but also from overseas *ulama,* particularly those from 'the centre of the Muslim world'. The NU Garis Lurus website reported that Sayyid Ahmad bin Muhammad Al Maliki of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, wanted to see the NU Garis Lurus general chairman K.H. Idrus Ramli. As stated on his Facebook account, Ramli said: "He (Sayyid Ahmad Al Maliki) motivated me a lot and prayed for me. [He asked me] to thank Allah. May we always be in the guidance of our teachers and *ulama*."[52]

### *"Not Ghibah, but Tahdzir"*

NU Garis Lurus has also been careful to frame its criticism of NU leadership from a sound religious point of view. The activists have argued that they have

not conducted *ghibah* (talking about and spreading one's weaknesses and errors), which is forbidden in Islam, in their criticism of and attack on Said Aqil Siradj and other NU leaders. Rather, they claim that they are actually revealing the errors and deviance of Siradj and others as *tahdhir* (religiously sanctioned warning) in order to remind them of their errors and warn people to avoid their corrupt ideas. To support this, they cited Muhammad Najih:

> Our critiques and disapproval of some prominent NU leaders are not aimed at charging them. But, rather they are aimed at giving *tahdzir* in the framework of *tahassun wat tahsin* (giving advice) to my brothers in NU and Islam. We do this to guard religious knowledge from being contaminated by viruses and to keep it running on its right track.[53]

To further support the strict religious legitimacy of their criticisms, they posted an article by Ustadz Abdul Muhsi, a *da'wah* activist who firmly fights against Shi'ism, Wahhabism and liberalism:

> In conclusion, the error of an Islamic public figure (an Islamic leader) must be revealed as clear as possible to the Muslim community in order to prevent an increase in the number of deviant people being deceived by the leader's artificial magnificence … . Imam Sufyan bin Uyainah said: "There are three kinds of persons whose errors can be publicly revealed: a leader who betrays their people, a *fasiq* who shows publicly their sinful acts, and a *bid'ah* (forbidden religious innovation) doer who asks people to follow their forbidden religious innovation."[54]

All the above-mentioned narratives were framed by NU Garis Lurus activists to depict themselves as the 'right' group and their movement as religiously motivated and sanctioned. By doing this, they hope to mobilise an audience that is receptive to and supportive of their views and that will join their mission of returning NU to its "authentic" teachings while challenging those who have corrupted those teachings – including the current NU chairman and his allies.

## Implications NU *Garis Lurus'* web presence

Based on the above description of the website used by NU Garis Lurus activists, I suggest that the group's web presence has implications that should not be dismissed. First, this online activity has helped NU Garis Lurus get more exposure to the Indonesian public, especially among certain sections of NU members and sympathisers. This gains NU Garis Lurus more popularity and more followers as its cause gets broadcast to a wider audience. The growing popularity and impact of the group can be seen in comments made on the website, where a relatively large number of readers agree and support the idea that NU is in danger due to being compromised by liberal, Shi'ite and

Wahhabi influences. Negative articles about Said Aqil Siradj and his allies also attract substantial support from readers.

Second, as it gets more followers and a resonance with a wider audience through its web use, NU Garis Lurus might pose a serious threat to the NU leadership. Compared to the limited support Garis Lurus attracted five years ago at the 2015 NU national congress, today the group's prominent figures might have more confidence if they run again in the election for NU chairmanship at the next national congress in 2020. If they can gain more support from various sections of NU's rank and file and raise their profile through their online presence, it could potentially have an impact on NU's national leadership structure.

Lastly, and most importantly, the skilful use of the internet provides NU Garis Lurus with more opportunities to advance their Islamist agenda and seriously threaten the NU ideology of moderate Islam. Their narrow interpretation and understanding of Islamic teachings have the potential to gain more ground and the support of wider sections of NU members and sympathisers. This could finally bring about a 'conservative turn' to NU, the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia. Considering NU's influence in the wider Indonesian Muslim community, such a change would surely have an impact on the moderate outlook of Indonesian Islam in general.

This is especially important when considering that NU Garis Lurus' online presence is not just limited to their official website but also makes use of internet-based social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The potential reach of NU Garis Lurus via social media is vast. This can be seen clearly in the social media accounts of NU Garis Lurus-affiliated preachers such as Abdul Somad, who has 1.2 million followers on his Facebook account and 3.7 million on Instagram (Arifianto, 2018).

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the internet has provided proponents of NU Garis Lurus with new and important resources to promote its ideology of the "authentic" NU to the Indonesian public and challenge the current NU leadership. There is clear evidence that NU Garis Lurus activists are using their official website to construct and promote the ideology of "authentic" NU in their attempt to purify NU of deviant ideas such as liberalism, pluralism, Shi'ism and Wahhabism. From the perspective of process framing theory, it appears they are doing this through three framing tasks: they use the website to diagnose perceived problems facing contemporary NU, offer solutions to the diagnosed problems, and create motivational vocabularies to gain support and recruit followers and sympathisers to join their cause.

NU Garis Lurus activists are aware that new media like the internet are important and valuable resources for achieving their goals. In particular, they are good at harnessing their website as a medium for constructing the

ideology of an "authentic" NU for distribution to a wider audience and gaining support from certain sections of NU members and internet users.

The internet has played an important role as a resource for NU Garis Lurus. Its use has allowed the group to expose a wider audience to their ideas and views. Their growing support base and popularity could lead to challenges for the existing NU leadership, perhaps even inspiring Garis Lurus members to mount another bid for national leadership positions at the 2020 national congress. For this reason, it would be wise for the NU leadership not to belittle NU Garis Lurus either online or offline.

Although this chapter is a preliminary study of the NU Garis Lurus movement and its web use, the findings provide insight into the rise of internal opposition against the current NU central leadership and its organisational ideology of moderate Islam. Further study is needed to better understand the impact of NU Garis Lurus via its presence on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

## Notes

1 Pesantren Sidogiri published a book that condemns the current NU chairman Said Aqil Siradj. See Ahmad Muntahal Hadi (ed.), *Sidogiri Menolak Pemikiran KH Said Aqil Siroj*, Sidogiri: Penerbit Sidogiri, 2017.
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# 7 MUI and its discursive relevance for "Aksi Bela Islam"

## A growing trend of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia

*Syafiq Hasyim*

### Introduction

The Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Council of Indonesian Ulama) had a clear hand in the emergence of the Aksi Bela Islam (ABI, Action to Defend Islam) phenomenon that has influenced Indonesian politics since 2016. ABI was a series of actions which was initiated by a coalition of Islamic groups – including the Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Islam's Defender Front), Gerakan Nasional Pembela Fatwa-MUI (GNPF-MUI, National Movement for MUI Fatwa's Defenders) and Forum Umat Islam (FUI, Forum of the Muslim Community) – united by their common desire to reject the candidacy of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) in the Jakarta gubernatorial elections of 2017. Even after Ahok was defeated and jailed and their preferred candidate (Anies Baswedan) came out victorious, the ABI continued to nurse their political agenda, transforming from a temporary movement to a more permanent Islamic pressure organisation with an anti-Jokowi angle.

The role of MUI in this story has been significant. It played a key role in the mobilisation of the Jakarta Muslim community and its surrounding urban areas when ABI organised its demonstrations. MUI supported the ABI protest through its official statements, i.e. Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI (Opinion and Religious Response of MUI), which was used by the GNPF-MUI to show that their movement was supported by MUI (Kumparan.com 2017).

This chapter depicts a broad picture of the rising trend of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia by looking at the role of Islamic organisation in Indonesia. It specifically addresses the problem of rising Islamic conservatism in the discourse of MUI. It examines the MUI discourse, specific discursive products (such as *fatwa*-legal ruling and recommendations) and the relevance of MUI to the development of the ABI movement.

It establishes the role of MUI and the ABI movement in the growing conservatism of Islam in Indonesia. What is the significance of Islamic conservatism within MUI and its relation to other Islamic movements? To what extent does Islamic conservatism – influenced by both local actors and external ones – play in shaping ideational and socio-political changes within these

groups while contributing to the ongoing expression of identity politics in Indonesia? Furthermore, what is driving the convergence of MUI and the ABI? Are there any issues that unite MUI and the ABI in the same perspective and movement? Is the relationship between MUI and the ABI permanent or just temporary? Finally, will MUI remain relevant to the future ABI movement?

This article is based on desk study and online media materials. I have also conducted some conversations with members of the MUI elite. My personal observations of the MUI and ABI movement are used in this chapter. All these materials and the results are combined to compose my analysis.

## The establishment of MUI and its conservative tendency

MUI was established in 1975 with the full support of Suharto to become the partner of the state in socialising Islam and the role of Islam in the public sphere. Thus, MUI was designed to disseminate Islamic teachings that are in line with the interests of the ruling regime. In the early Suharto era, the state instituted a limited separation of religion and politics as both involved sensitive issues that should not be mixed for the sake of social cohesion. One of MUI's missions was to strengthen the regime's legitimacy in promoting the role of *ulama* in religious affairs. Its circumscribed and designated role was conveyed through the motto of *khadim al-hukumah* (guardian of government), thereby indicating that MUI was to serve the ruling government. On this basis, MUI avoided political issues and was moderate in its interpretation of Islam because it endorsed the separation of religion from politics.

The fall of Suharto and the rise of an open democratic era has led to a complete shift in MUI. It has become highly conservative in religion and critical in politics. Politicians have played a key role in strengthening its public role. During Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency, MUI was given recognition as the police of *aqidah* (religious creed) and morality. In this role, MUI oversees and monitors deviant *aqidah*. Deviant organisations and individuals are supervised to direct them adopt the correct *aqidah*. If MUI's supervision is rejected, MUI will issue a *fatwa* or religious ruling that they are a deviant sect of Islam, which is virtually religious exile. As the police of morality, MUI promotes *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (commanding rights by forbidding wrong). To carry out its role, MUI monitors immoral actions in society that are forbidden by Islam. In this regard, there is a convergence of interest between MUI and Islamic organisations like FPI, HTI, FUI and MMI that often claim to act as the guardians of Islamic morality (*amar ma'ruf*) in Indonesia. For example, these organisations will destroy "sinful" actions and places. MUI's newfound role thereby creates an impression that MUI is a conservative Islamic organisation (van Bruinessen 2013).

However, as an organisation whose members comprise *ulama* from various backgrounds and with different organisational affiliations, MUI is a dynamic *ulama* organisation. MUI derives its membership from the two largest Indonesian Islamic organisations, NU and Muhammadiyah, but also from small Islamic organisations such as Persatuan Islam (Persis) (Federspiel 2009), Mathla'ul Anwar (Islamic organisation based in Banten), or even the Salafi quasi-organisation Wahdah Islamiyah (based in Makassar) (Tajuddin n.d.) and elsewhere. This accommodation derives from its ambition to serve as an umbrella organisation for diverse elements of the Muslim community – to be a *tenda umat Islam* (tent of the Muslim community) (Hasyim 2015). Because of this background, dissenting opinions and perceptions corresponding with diverse ideological and political beliefs colour the drafting of MUI's discursive products. These internal dynamics or conflicts are resolved internally to present a single unified voice to the public. Unfortunately, inclusive and moderate voices usually become suppressed by the "necessity" of upholding its role as the police of both *aqidah* and public morality. These two roles contribute to MUI taking conservative positions on most religious, ethical and political issues (Schaefer 2019; Sirry 2013).

The increasing Islamic conservatism of MUI merits public attention because as an *ulama* organisation, MUI plays an important role in Muslims' socio-cultural life; it has shaped all aspects of Islamic as well as non-Islamic life. Through its *fatwa* and *tawsiyyah* (Islamic recommendations) MUI can impose its model of theology, worship, lifestyle and much else on other groups of the Muslim community. In the case of halal issues, MUI can impose national regulations on the necessity of halal certification for all kinds of products. When the tendency of MUI *fatwa* and *tawsiyyah* is conservative, it shapes the conservatism of other groups of Indonesian Muslims. This is clearly visible with regard to MUI's role in guarding Islamic *aqidah*, where MUI routinely issues *fatwa* on deviant sects of Islam (Gillespie 2007; Hasyim 2016; Ichwan 2013).

## The discursive products of MUI and Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI

MUI has the power to issue two discursive products of Islamic law: the *fatwa* (Islamic legal opinion) and the *tawsiyyah* (Islamic recommendation). Each discursive product of MUI has its own characteristics. A *fatwa* is developed and issued in response to specific questions relating to Islam from the *fatwa* seeker (*mustaftī*) – the answer provided to the *fatwa* seeker by the Mufti of MUI is a *fatwa* (Hallaq 2005; Masud et al. 1996; Salāh 1986). The action of the fatwa seeker is called *istiftā'* and the Mufti action of 'giving fatwa' is called *iftā'* (Bin Bayyah 2007; Ṡalāh 1986).

*Fatwa* has a legal dimension in the tradition of Islamic legal theory, but it is not legally binding for either the seeker or the general Muslim community. In fact, many Indonesians including the state apparatus (the police, the

attorney general, state bureaucrats) are not aware that *fatwa* does not have legal binding force. As a result, the police and state apparatus frequently make use of *fatwa* coming from MUI to determine actions in the public sphere. In addition, they refer to the MUI *fatwa* as the source of their policy decision. Further, on many occasions the state apparatus – for instance, the attorney general – plays the role of *mustfatī*, seeking guidance from MUI on public questions. This practice can be considered a sign of the soft shariatisation of state agencies. *Tawsiyyah* are issued by MUI in the form of advice and recommendations to the Muslim community in general but also the government regarding important political, social, cultural and many other kinds of issue. In the hierarchy of MUI discourses, *fatwa* is considered "stronger" than *tawṣiyyah*.

How should we understand the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI (Opinion and Religious Response of MUI), a document used by the anti-Ahok coalition to justify their actions? Although the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI was established in 1975, it was only published in 2017. Although this document is not found in the nomenclature of MUI and its guidelines, Ma'ruf Amin (general chairman of MUI, 2015–2020, and Indonesian vice president 2019–2024) said that the Islamic legal status of Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI is considered to be higher than *fatwa* (Majelis Ulama Indonesia 2017). This statement actually contains multiple possible meanings. The first is that the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI was issued due to the urgency (*darurat*) of the situation, which therefore merited its use. The second interpretation is that Ahok's statement had a political dimension, requiring a stronger tool than either a *fatwa* or *tawṣiyyah.* It reflected the seriousness with which MUI took the threat posed by Ahok. Third, Ahok defamed not only the Qur'an but also *ulama* in general.

However, despite the difference in nomenclature, the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan is a similar product to a *fatwa*. It contains a legal opinion that purports to address a specific question or problem. In traditional Islamic legal theory, the issuance of *fatwa* should occur only after a question has been asked by a *mustafti* (*fatwa* seeker). From the perspective of MUI, a question (*istifta*) need not be directly posed for the Islamic authority to have the right to reply through a *fatwa*. For MUI, a question does not only include something asked in verbal and oral form but can also be a social problem that requires redress. For instance, MUI can issue a *fatwa* when they believe that a social problem in the public sphere has generated a need for clarification or is a moral dilemma for believers of Islam. In the eyes of *fatwa* makers in MUI, Ahok's contention that Chapter 5 (Al-Maidah), verse 51 has been used by a group of Islamic preachers to discredit him fulfils the requirement of a question (*mas'alah*) that requires an answer (an Islamic legal opinion). So, the public controversy generated by the Ahok speech was sufficient for MUI to publish a legal opinion. This is why I consider Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI as a *fatwa*.

The Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI published on 11 October 2016 consisted of two important sections. The first part explains MUI's *sikap keagamaan* (religious stance):

1 Al-Maidah chapter (verse 51 of the Quran) explicitly prohibits the leadership of Jewish and Christian people. This verse is one among Qur'anic arguments for the rejection of non-Muslims for being the leader of Muslim community.
2 It is compulsory for *ulama* (Muslim scholars) to disseminate the proper meaning of this verse to the Muslim community, namely that electing a Muslim leader is an Islamic obligation.
3 Each Muslim should believe in the proper meaning of the verse in providing guidance for electing a leader.
4 Proclaiming that or conveying the impression that the content of the verse is fake utterance is *haram* and a form of blasphemy.
5 Ascribing "*bohong*" (fake) to *ulama* who use the verse as argument to ban non-Muslim as a leader is the form of defamation to *ulama* and the Muslim community.

Based on the five points, Ahok has committed (1) a blasphemy act to the Qur'an and (2) defamation to *ulama* that has a legal consequence. Referring to these points, MUI specifically recommends that:

1 The government and community of Indonesia are obliged to secure harmony in religious, societal and national life.
2 The government of Indonesia has an obligation to address blasphemy and defamation to the Qur'an and Islam.
3 Law enforcement apparatus should handle all people who commit blasphemy and defamation to the Qur'an and Islam and to the *ulama* and Muslim community in accordance with Indonesian law.
4 Law enforcement apparatus should proactively impose the law in a fair, fast, proportional and professional manner by considering *keadilan masyarakat* (sense of community justice). This is to raise public trust in law enforcement in Indonesia.
5 The Indonesian community is persuaded to remain calm, not take part in acts of vigilantism and place their faith in the state apparatus, beside observing and filing reports on those who are committing blasphemy and defamation.

Was the issuance of Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI an extraordinary action taken by MUI? Compared to previous opinions published by MUI, the issuance of this Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI is actually relatively normal and predictable, although a significant political dimension can be discerned. The following part is devoted to some underlying discourses that bear a resemblance in content to the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI.

## Underlying discourses

Most importantly, the candidacy of Ahok as the governor of Jakarta in the Jakarta gubernatorial elections 2017 created a point of convergence and commonality of interest between MUI and ABI groups. As a *fatwa* organisation, MUI has its own concept of national leadership from the perspective of Islam, especially with respect to the Muslim-majority provinces of Indonesia. Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia and therefore serves as the barometer of the whole country. Thus, Jakarta cannot be led by a non-Muslim leader. Although this is not stipulated in the Constitution of Indonesia, MUI rejects the idea of non-Muslim leadership in Jakarta, and this is in line with the perspective of the ABI group.

As a result, Ahok becomes a common enemy for both MUI and ABI groups. He was already rejected by MUI and some segments of the Jakarta Muslim community when he was appointed as the vice-gubernatorial candidate of Jokowi in 2012. In 2014, Jokowi was elected as the Indonesian president and Ahok took over as governor. Although this was mandated by law, some Muslim groups – for instance, FPI, FUI, and Gerakan Masyarakat Jakarta (GMJ, the Jakarta Community Movement) – could not accept this. They mobilised their supporters to call for removing Ahok from his new position as the governor of Jakarta. Besides staging protests and mass demonstrations, these groups chose Fahrurrozi Ishaq as the shadow Jakarta governor to signal Ahok's illegitimacy (Kompas.com 2014).

The assumption of MUI that Jakarta should be led by a Muslim governor can be considered a valid explanation for the desire on the part of MUI and ABI to replace Ahok, but it was by no means the only reason. Specifically, both MUI and ABI had hidden agendas.

### *Leadership in Islam*

An important component of the underlying discourse of MUI that stimulated the ABI mobilisation is related to the MUI concept of Islamic leadership. MUI has long believed that political leaders in Indonesia should be Muslim. The fact that the country has a majority Muslim population is used by MUI as an argument. There are many Muslim organisations that endorse MUI's theological view, including FPI, MMI, HTI and FUI. In contrast, Indonesia's two moderate Muslim organisations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, argue that, according to the Constitution of Indonesia, all Indonesian citizens have an equal right to become a political leader.

The Ahok speech in the island of Seribu was used by MUI to justify its long-standing position on the necessity of Islamic political leadership in Indonesia. MUI places the issue of Islamic leadership within the domain of the "un-changeable" (Arabic: *qaṭ(ī*) – that is, it cannot be compromised and forms part of the Islamic creed. Thus, those who go beyond the agreed parameters of the *qaṭ(ī* can be judged as deviant. MUI realises that preferences

around such a leadership model can make Muslim people into either believers or non-believers, as mentioned in the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI.

While MUI is very clear that a Pancasila-based Indonesian state is its final form, it continues to insist that Islamic political leadership is a religious obligation. The MUI concept of this Islamic leadership is similar to the concept of Islamic leadership in the Shia tradition, although in 1984 MUI argued that the Shia model of leadership is different from the Sunni model. In the Sunni tradition, political leadership (*imām*) does not fall under the unchangeable doctrine of Islam. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) believed that political leadership is more about leadership quality than leadership quantity (person), therefore a non-Muslim can be a leader if they are qualified to do justice to the role (Taymiyya 1983). MUI argued that a non-Muslim cannot be chosen as a political leader because the function of leader within Islam is to provide leadership with regard to both mundane issues (*ri'asat al-dunya*) and Islam (*ri'asat al-Islam*). Therefore, non-Muslims are not eligible to be leaders in the context of Indonesia as a Muslim-majority country. Muslim citizens are not allowed to choose or follow non-Islamic leaders.

The MUI concept of Islamic leadership is implicit in the state ideology, Pancasila. From the perspective of Jeremy Menchik, having an Islamic leadership can be said to be part of the implementation of "Godly nationalism" in the country (Menchik 2014). The state form can have a secular model, but its content should be always based on the doctrine of *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Godliness). Having an Islamic leader at every level of government administration – from village to state – ensures that Indonesia is governed by leaders with Muslim sensibilities. Consequently, from time to time, MUI has urged Indonesian Muslims to choose Muslim figures as their leaders. Even if all the political candidates are Muslim, MUI thinks that the most pious (Indonesian expression: *paling Islami*) should be given priority. The meaning of "the most pious Muslim" is a Muslim person who exhibits his/her piety in the public sphere, at not only the practical but also the discourse level. One of MUI's required qualifications is the theological purity of such a leader. Thus, MUI will not accept leaders who have a heretical tendency in their *aqidah* – and in this it will take into consideration the personal affairs of leaders, their close relatives, associations and even friends.

In the Jakarta gubernatorial elections of 2014, MUI's promotion of the concept of more pious Islamic leader did not really work. Jokowi (the current Indonesian president) was to compete with Fauzi Bowo (governor of Jakarta). Jokowi was faced with the issue of Islamic leadership because his candidate as vice governor was Ahok – Chinese and Christian. However, this attack could be sidestepped because, from the perspective of MUI, vice governor is not considered a real leadership role and Jokowi, the 'real' leader, is Muslim. Nevertheless, MUI was on the side of Fauzi Bowo-Nachrawi because the pair was considered to be more Islamic than Jokowi-Ahok.

MUI has activated the issue of electing more pious and purist Muslim leaders on other occasions since the reform era began in 1998. In the

presidential election of 2009, MUI endorsed Jusuf Kalla-Wiranto because they were seen as more pious and puritan than other Muslim candidates. MUI published a fatwa, as the result of the Ijtima Ulama[1] it held in Padang, West Sumatera. The fatwa contains five points:

1 General elections in the perspective of Islam are an attempt to elect a leader or deputy leader that fulfils the ideal conditions for Muslim aspirations and state interest.
2 Electing an Islamic leader is an obligation for leadership and government.
3 Islamic leadership and government require religious qualifications for the sake of public goodness in society.
4 Electing a leader who is a believer, pious, honest (*ṣiddiq*), faithful (*amanah*), aspirational (*tabligh*), intelligent (*fatanah*) and committed to the interests of the Muslim community is an Islamic obligation.
5 Electing a leader who is not qualified as mentioned in point 1 while there is a qualified candidate is prohibited in Islam.

The qualification of point 4 can be read as a kind of implicit endorsement for Jusuf Kalla and Wiranto. It was evident from public discourse approaching the time of the general elections of 2009, which circulated stigmatising comments about other candidates. The religiosity of the SBY-Budiono pair was called into question due to involvement with non-Muslims. In this, the religious identity of Budiono's wife Herawati, was publicly brought into the public sphere. Pamphlets circulated around the country stating that Herawati was not a Muslim. If she converted to Islam, it would be because of the presidential elections (Hidayatullah.com 2009). Megawati was not seen as a suitable candidate for presidency because in the eyes of MUI a leader had to be male.

In the 2014 general elections, MUI's position was relatively neutral. On this occasion, instead of issuing a *fatwa*, MUI published a *tawsiyyah* (Islamic recommendation).[2] This time round, MUI did not endorse any particular candidate. The recommendation has six points:

1 All Indonesian citizens should exercise their electoral rights in the presidential election of 2014. The general elections constitute the national agenda for determining the direction of the state.
2 Holders of general elections must ensure that the elections can run safely and peacefully and be of good quality.
3 Holders of general elections should be trusted and professional in accounting the result of elections.
4 All presidential and vice-presidential candidates should promote fair competition and respect brotherhood.
5 The Muslim community should prioritise tolerance and respect different political choices.
6 The Muslim community should vote on the basis of their conscience.

The MUI *tawsiyyah* took a neutral position, but this might have been due to a political calculation as it was unclear who would win in the general elections. Furthermore, MUI's leaders were divided over their preferred candidate. In the second round of the 2014 presidential elections, there were only two candidates – Jokowi and Prabowo Subianto. MUI could not endorse either candidate as president because both of them had established ties with MUI elites. Jokowi was politically secured through his vice president Jusuf Kalla, while Prabowo had a long connection with the conservative elites within MUI. Even during the Suharto era, Prabowo had intensely communicated with conservative Muslim elite groups who were actually members of MUI (Hefner 2000). MUI was under the strong control of Suharto, especially during Kyai Hasan Basri's leadership. Another issue related to the neutrality of MUI's *tawṣiyyah* was that within MUI itself, the political aspirations of its elites were divided between Prabowo and Jokowi. For example, Din Syamsuddin (former general chairman of Muhammadiyah) supported Jokowi because Jusuf Kalla was the vice-presidential candidate, and Cholil Ridwan (the MUI leader from Dewan Dakwah Islamiyyah, DDI) was inclined to vote for Prabowo because of their long acquaintance.

### *Blasphemy*

Blasphemy, or religious defamation (*penistaan agama*), had been used by MUI historically and was not restricted to the Ahok case. Indeed, MUI had lobbied for blasphemy charges soon after its creation in 1975. Although MUI does not have a specific *fatwa* on blasphemy and defamation, the position of MUI in both cases is strict and clear. The lack of a MUI fatwa on blasphemy on Islam is because this issue is clearly stipulated in the Qur'an and Hadith. Thus, in instances where the Qur'an and Hadith have already established the Islamic religious position explicitly, MUI does not need to issue a *fatwa*, confining itself to implementing the content of the Qur'an and Hadith in this matter. On the other hand, MUI can also utilise a *fatwa* on a *aliran sesat* (deviant sect) as the vehicle for developing an Islamic legal opinion on particular cases of blasphemy and defamation. This is methodologically known as *ilhaq*, the taking of a legal stance on cases that already have their legal status in Islamic law (MUI 2011). Crucially, the categories developed by MUI on issues of blasphemy and defamation are drawn from the Sunni majority's theological beliefs. Therefore, the practice of Sufism and Shia has become the object of blasphemy and defamation in some cases. In the 1980s, MUI had issued a *fatwa* on the heresy of Ahmadis (followers of Ahmadiyyah). Ahmadiyyah arriving in Indonesia since the colonial era was deemed to be not part of Islam. According to MUI, the belief of Ahmadis that Mirza Ghulam Akhmad was "a prophet" after Muhammad can be categorised as blasphemy (Gillespie 2007; Hasyim 2011; MUI n.d.).

In the case of Ahok, MUI forthrightly issued its Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan, which states that Ahok committed both blasphemy and defamation.

The point of blasphemy is discovered in Ahok's statement on Al-Maidah chapter (verse 51 of the Qur'an). In the perspective of MUI, Ahok had blasphemed against Islam when he asserted that the prohibition against non-Muslim leaders was not part of the unchangeable doctrine of Islam but remained open to debate and interpretation. This position, which was adopted from Abdurrahman Wahid, the grandson of the founder of the Nadhlatul Ulama, constitutes his blasphemy charge. On the other hand, Ahok was considered to have defamed the *ulama* when he characterised the teachings of *ulama* who agreed with MUI's position as a "fake interpretation". In MUI's view, Ahok as a non-Muslim in this case was guilty of advancing his personal interpretation, which is in line with the definition of blasphemy stipulated in UU I/PNPS/1965. On this basis, MUI has a strong legal case to say that Ahok has committed blasphemy to Islam (the Qur'an). It is clearly mentioned in this law that religious interpretation can become the object of blasphemy. The state law I/PNPS/1965 states that "interpretation which is wrong done in public can be judged as blasphemy". This is the point made by MUI regarding the Ahok statement in the Kepulauan Seribu.

Historically speaking, the commitment of MUI to fighting against blasphemy does not only relate to the case of Ahok. Lia Eden, Usman Roy, Akhmad Mushaddiq and many others were issued *fatwas* by MUI for committing blasphemy (Hasyim 2011; MUI n.d.). The MUI commitment is also reflected in its rejection of the judicial review of UU I/PNPS/1965 that was filed by an alliance of NGOs and three national figures, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (d. 2009), Dawam Rahardjo (d. 2018) and Musdah Mulia in 2009. The MUI position was on the side of the government of Indonesia – that is, it defended the importance of implementing UU I/PNPS/1965. MUI was in the first rank of the (24) parties that rejected the judicial review of UU I/PNPS/1965 (Mahkamah Konstitusi 2009, h. 150). The main argument of the MUI rejection was that judicial review would create uncontrolled or excessive religious freedom.

MUI's position in rejecting the judicial review was evident in its written witness statement presented at the Constitutional Court trial (Mahkamah Konstitusi 2009, h. 139). MUI stated that religious freedom in the reform era of Indonesia created both opportunity and challenge. MUI appreciated that *dakwah* activities could now take place and the values of Islam be voiced freely, unlike in Suharto-era Indonesia. However, MUI argued that the excessive implementation of religious freedom would endanger the life of Islam because it creates a space for the rise of deviant groups of Islam. More than that, religious freedom is a fertile soil for the 'mushrooming' of those who would abandon their duty to sharia and lead to an increase in incidents of blasphemy. MUI understood that the state could not refrain from limiting the excessive implementation of religious freedom in the public sphere because it could pave the way to chaotic and tumultuous situations in public life. MUI also urged that spiritual and material damage to the public interest caused by deviant sects should be weighed by the judges of MK.

For those who were already 'infected' by deviancy, MUI urged the state to implement a concrete action agenda to stop Islamic deviance and blasphemy and bring citizens back to the true path of Islam. This can be seen as part of the responsibility MUI felt to act as the "one roof" of Islam in Indonesia. As the legacy of Prophet Muhammad, MUI saw its main role and responsibility as guiding the community to implement Islam as practised by the Prophet. MUI states that the role of *ulama* should be strict, just and sensitive to any emerging forms of deviance related to either *aqidah* or sharia. In the view of MUI, lack of clarity by *ulama* and the state regarding the phenomena of Islamic deviance and blasphemy leads to the flourishing emergence of *aqidah* and sharia aberration among the Muslim community. MUI as the 'tent' encompassing *ulama* and leaders in Indonesia should play an active role in protecting the Muslim community from the influence of any sort of deviant sect. MUI felt it was urgent to formulate a general guidance (*pedoman*) to address the definition of deviant groups by providing analysis, study and Islamic arguments.

From the MUI's stance on the judicial review process above, deviant sects and blasphemy seem to have become its chief preoccupations. It can be concluded that the commitment of MUI in fighting against deviant sects and blasphemy relates not only to the Ahok case but also to many other cases. Nevertheless, the politically motivated blasphemy charge against Ahok remains a compelling proposition. On many occasions, the blasphemy issue has been resolved through peaceful dialogue between MUI and the accused. But in the case of Ahok, despite the fact that he has asked the pardon of MUI and the Muslim community, MUI continues to demand that he be subjected to legal process. This unrelenting stance is perceived by others as MUI's way of doing politics.

### *Religious harmony*

MUI sees that the statement of Ahok in the Kepulauan Seribu could potentially create disharmony among religious believers in Indonesia (Detik.com 2016). The religious harmony of Jakarta is the barometer of religious harmony in many other regions in Indonesia. The concept of religious harmony promoted by MUI is also based on the MUI Consensus Meeting of 2009, held in Padang, West Sumatra. There are eight points of *fatwa* in the "Principles of Islamic Teaching on Inter Religious Community Relations in the Framework of NKRI" (*Prinsip Ajaran Islam mengenai Hubungan Antarumat Beragama dalam Bingkai Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia [NKRI]* (MUI 2011).

The content of the *fatwa* is as follows:

1 There is a national consensus on Indonesia as a NKRI state, Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the state, and the 1945 Constitution as the constitution of Indonesia of the state.

2 The state of Indonesia is ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse. Therefore, the people of Indonesia idealise Indonesia as both plural and united (unity in diversity).
3 As the largest religious community, the Muslim community of Indonesia should maintain the national consensus.
4 In terms of plurality of religions, the state recognises several religions and each religion has an equal position before the state Constitution. The state assures all citizens that they may follow their religions.
5 Islam recognises the presence of other religions without recognising their truth. During the era of Prophet Muhammad, the existence of other religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism were also recognised.
6 In the context of the nation-state, with the proclamation of Indonesia independence in 1945, Islam regards other religious followers as citizens of Indonesia who are equal to other citizens and bound to live in peaceful coexistence.
7 In order to avoid inter-religious conflict in Indonesia, the state is responsible for enabling citizens to practise their religion and protecting the purity of their religions from blasphemy.
8 For each individual, group of people, institution and organisation that commits blasphemy, the state should take firm action as mandated by the state law of Indonesia.

The above helps us understand the reason behind why MUI issued Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI. MUI's position is that to maintain religious harmony, any kind of blasphemy or defamation should be dealt with seriously. Although the argument of religious harmony in the case of Ahok may certainly be contested, the Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan is consistent with the *fatwa* produced by MUI's consensus meeting.

In a comparative framework, the position of MUI is different from a human rights perspective in understanding religious harmony. From the perspective of human rights, religious harmony should not be at the expense of religious freedom. Religious freedom is the right of all human beings regardless of their religion. The priority is religious freedom and religious harmony becomes the second priority; it follows from this that religious harmony that omits religious freedom is unacceptable. In this perspective, the Ahok speech had no blasphemous content. MUI is in the opposite camp, believing that religious harmony should be prioritised over religious freedom.

## The genesis of Aksi Bela Islam

The genesis of Aksi Bela Islam (ABI) cannot be separated from the creation of GNPF-MUI (Gerakan Nasional Pembela Fatwa-Majelis Ulama Indonesia, National Movement for Fatwa Defender-Council of Indonesian Ulama). GNPF-MUI, which was initiated by Bachtiar Nasir and Zaitun Rasmin,

spearheaded the series of ABI demonstrations. Bachtiar Natsir is an alumnus of the modern boarding school of Gontor and then the University of Medina. Zaitun Rasmin is the chairman of Wahdah Islamiyyah, a Makassar-based Salafi organisation. The initiative of GNPF-MUI was crucial in attracting the sympathy and participation of the Muslim community. Although the name of MUI was attached to GNPF, this organisation has no institutional relationship with MUI. The addition of MUI here reflects not the organisational but rather the Islamic discursive connection. It simply means that the establishment of GNPF-MUI was motivated by the issuance of Pandangan dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI. It enabled the organisation to "borrow" MUI's authority in this regard.

The phrase *aksi bela Islam* was not used by GNPF-MUI and its groups initially. It only gained traction after the first demonstration which was held in response to the Ahok speech in October 2016. Chronologically speaking, Ahok visited the Kepulauan Seribu as part of his job as governor of Jakarta, disseminating information about the Krapu farming project on 26 September 2016. A month later, on 6 October 2016, Buni Yani uploaded the video footage of the Ahok speech in his personal Facebook account with the title, "Blasphemy Towards Religion?" The title was also intentionally employed to provoke anti-Ahok sentiments with regard to his gubernatorial candidacy. It was evident in his posting several months before when someone filed a report to the Police Investigation Division to charge Yani withj a violation of the State Law on Electronic Transaction. However, Buni Yani denied he was expressing support for Ahok's political opponents – specifically Anies Baswedan and Agus Yudhoyono. Rather, he said that the national political figures he most idolised were Prabowo (president of Gerindra) and Shohibul Iman (president of PKS).

The first joint-mobilised action of GNPF-MUI, FPI, FUI and others took place on 14 October 2016 in front of the governor offices in Jakarta. The action was to pressure the regime to issue an immediate response to decide the matter of Ahok's alleged blasphemy. The prominent leader of Aksi Bela Islam, Habib Rizieq Shihab, threatened consequences if there was no a clear follow-up from the National Police within three weeks. In order to speed up the arrest of Ahok, Rizieq planned a larger demonstration. When there was no response, Rizieq Shihab decided to carry out his threat.

Rizieq Shihab worked to mobilise a very large action on 4 November. This action became known as Peaceful Action 411 (the number 4 refers to the date and the number 11 refers to the month of demonstration). GNPF-MUI began to take on a bolder role as the public communicator of ABI, leveraging Bachtiar Nasir's public communication skills. He told the police on 24 October 2016 that a larger demonstration would be rallied defend the Quran. Bachtiar Nasir also issued a public reminder to President Joko Widodo and Tito Karnavian (head of the National Police of Indonesia) to warn them not to intervene to protect Ahok from the legal process. It was clear that the problem was Ahok's gubernatorial candidacy.

The Peaceful Action 411 did not succeed in securing access to Jokowi. They could only meet Vice President Jusuf Kalla and other important ministers. The result of this meeting was Jusuf Kalla's instruction to the head of the National Police to speed up the process of blasphemy charges against Ahok. Because Jokowi was not present at that meeting, the decision was announced by Jusuf Kalla. This instruction placed the National Police in a difficult position because there is a legal agreement that, in the interest of provincial and district elections, no legal cases relating to candidates will be processed till the elections are completed. However, in this case, the police had to respond to strong public pressure.

Although Jusuf Kalla guaranteed that Ahok would be subject to legal process, the mobilisation of ABI continued. As their third form of action, GNPF-MUI and other important coalition members planned a Friday prayer demonstration for 2 December 2016, to take place on the Sudirman main road, part of the business district of Jakarta. According to the initial plan, the whole road was to be occupied by of Friday prayer *jama'ah* (members). This created a public debate over whether Friday prayer could be performed on the road, disturbing the public. Nahdlatul Ulama issued a *fatwa* that performing Friday prayer on the road is invalid due to its potential to disturb public order (NU Online 2016). According to the Nahdlatul Ulama f*atwa*, public interest should be prioritised. As a result, the location was changed to the National Monument (Monas) of Jakarta.

It is important to note that the name Aksi Bela Islam (ABI) was designed to attract public attention after the third phase of mobilisation. It can be also said that this demonstration was the most iconic given that its due date has become the name of the whole movement, 212. MUI had become anxious about developments and sought to intervene and play a key role in the Friday prayer event. Having learned from the two previous actions, MUI did not want to lose its their grid among grassroots Muslims. Therefore, in the meeting between General Police Tito Karnavian, Kyai Ma'ruf Amin, Rizieq Shihab and the representative of GNPF-MUI at the MUI office, it was agreed that the Friday prayer would be led by Kyai Ma'ruf Amin, chairman of MUI, despite the fact that Rizieq wanted to lead it. However, Ma'ruf Amin was not quite sure whether he could attend, and in the end he skipped the event. The absence of Ma'ruf Amin can be interpreted as a sign that MUI was suspicious and wished to to distance itself from the event.

## MUI, ABI and the state?

What is the position of MUI now? After the issuance of *its Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan*, MUI's position towards the ABI movement became increasingly ambivalent. MUI preferred not to fully endorse the struggle of ABI. It preferred to wait and see. Hence, there was a growing public impression that MUI had politicised the Ahok case. MUI has started to distance itself from ABI since its third demonstration on 2 December 2016. However, in general,

relations between MUI and GNPF remained civil until the end of the Ahok trial. For instance, Jokowi made overtures to the chairman of MUI Ma'ruf Amin by offering concrete programmes for collaboration between the government and MUI, such as on the redistribution of assets. In this instance, the government gave MUI the responsibility of taking over unproductive government lands and handing them to Muslim citizens. The significance of this event is that the Jokowi government felt compelled to offer MUI patronage.

The nomenclature of GNPF-MUI was also changed to GNPF-Ulama (Hidayatullah.com 2017). This name change was a subtle snub and also reflects the political dimension of GNPF. MUI became aware that its authority was being used by GNPF, prompting MUI to distance itself from GNPF. By changing its name, the organisation indicated that it no longer sees itself as a defender of MUI *fatwa*. Instead, it claims to be a defender of all Indonesian *ulama*. This shows that GNPF may change how it refers to itself to serve its own political purpose.

## Concluding remarks

The support MUI gave to the ABI is not peculiar, but understandable, and pointed to in many discourses produced by MUI before the Ahok case. It is this that gave rise to the expression "discursive relevance" in the title of this chapter. However, the MUI stance in the case of Ahok cannot be entirely divorced from politicisation, which is readable in the way MUI uses the *fatwa* on the Islamic leadership. MUI *fatwa* on the nature of leadership within Islam has always changed from time to time. In formulating its *fatwa*, MUI is not immune from political considerations. This also happened during the Suharto era, when MUI used its *fatwa* to legitimise Suharto's policy on Islam. However, MUI stopped its manoeuver when Ahok was sentenced for his blasphemous speech.

MUI has now distanced itself from the ABI movement. MUI considers the Ahok case to be over following the latter's imprisonment. On the other hand, ABI's political agenda is still incomplete. Now MUI considers that a closer alliance with the Joko Widodo regime has more strategic value than an alliance with the ABI. In terms of discursive relevance, there is still possible ground for unity between the two groups. However, in terms of pragmatic relevance, the distance between them is too great to bridge. While theological relevance sometimes unites them, when political circumstances come to the fore, pragmatic relevance becomes more important. This will continue to influence MUI's relationship with the Indonesian state for the foreseeable future.

## Notes

1 The Ijtima Ulama is one of very important forums that belong to MUI in making and issuing *fatwa* and *tawṣiyya*. It is regularly done and its product is nationally considered as reference for many leaders to make policy.

2 The level of fatwa is higher than that of Islamic recommendation in the perspective of MUI.

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# 8 The rise and fall of "transnational" Islam in Indonesia

## The future of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)

*Masdar Hilmy*

### Introduction

In July 2017 the Indonesian government issued Perppu (Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang or Government Regulation as Replacement for a Legislative Act) No. 2/2017 on mass organisations, which establishes strict conditions for any mass social organisation in Indonesia to exist. One of the requirements is that the organisation must be based on Pancasila, and it restricts social organisations from adopting any ideology that contradicts Pancasila or the 1945 Indonesia Constitution (UUD 1945). As a result, any social organisation whose ideology openly challenges Pancasila and UUD 1945 is subject to being banned by the government. The first mass organisation targeted by this act was Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI).

The act itself is controversial. Those who disagree with it argue that the act contradicts the basic principles of democracy adopted by Indonesia during the reform period such as the right to exercise freedom of speech in the public sphere. Ismail Yusanto, HTI's spokesperson, has argued that the ban is illegitimate and represents a form of authoritarianism which is against the rule of law and democracy. According to Yusanto, prior to the ban HTI should have received at least two official warning notices concerning its misconduct as mandated by the act. Yet the government never issued any warning letter to HTI; it unilaterally decided to ban the organisation without any communication in advance.

This paper seeks to analyse the ideology and movement of HTI as well as its future after the Perppu. It argues that the ban can dissolve HTI activities, but it will never end the ideology of transnational Islam adopted by the organisation. This is because ideology is created by opportunity structures; if social problems such as poverty, injustice and political oppression endure, the transnational ideology will follow as a form of response to these conditions.

Within the configuration of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia, HTI forms a segment comprising relatively well-educated middle-class Muslims who are articulate in the public sphere. Even though it operates outside of the formal political party system, its activists have proven they have a knack for making pointed criticisms and disseminating these effectively through social media.

In the aftermath of its banning by the government, HTI activists will likely keep a low profile, at least for now.

## *Khilafah*: the backbone of HTI's ideology

As an Islamist organisation, HTI has similar ideological principles to other Islamist organisations such as Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) and Front Pembela Islam (FPI). These groups share the ideology of an Islamic state *(khilafah*), which includes the enactment of Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) as a legal foundation for the state, the principle of inseparability of state from religion (*din wa al-dawlah), Shari'ah* economics including a proscription against charging interest, and opposition to the concept of democracy and nationalism (HTI 2002). What differentiates HTI from the rest, however, is its adoption of the ideology of *khilafah Islamiyah* (Islamic caliphate), a transnational Islamic identity that transcends the national boundaries and identities of different Muslim nations all over the world. While other Islamist organisations subscribe to the above ideological principles, HTI's embrace of a transnational Islamic caliphate makes it distinctive (Muhtadi 2009).

For HTI, *khilafah* is considered the only solution for all types of human ills and crises, particularly those faced by Muslim nations. In the HTI narrative, Muslim societies enjoyed a peaceful and prosperous existence under a transnational caliphate until the Ottoman Empire was destroyed by Western forces in 1923. Hence, they desire the resurrection of *khilafah*, and a return to the perceived glory of a previous era. The rejection of other liberal Western principles such as secularism, democracy, capitalism, pluralism and globalisation is based on the argument that they are all man-made laws and principles that differ from Islamic *Shari'ah*. These liberal ideas represent a violation against God's sovereignty in terms of law-making, thus inimical to HTI's ideology.

It should be noted that despite sharing the same ideological foundations, HTI is not identical to Hizbut Tahrir (HT) in other parts of the world. HTI has grown up in an Indonesian context and therefore it has unique Indonesian characteristics. Chief among those is the mandate to promote the ideology of *khilafah* in a peaceful manner. Contrary to the HT strategy in other parts of the world such as Central Asia, HTI does not have any record of using violence to convey its message to the state or the public at large (Hilmy 2011; Naumkin 2005). It also differs from other Indonesian Islamist groups, particularly FPI, which has been involved in vicious attacks on religious minorities. HTI has therefore largely pursued its ideological goal of a transnational caliphate via non-violent means.

The proponents of HTI comprise mostly well-educated middle-class Muslims from "secular" campuses such as the Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB), Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Surabaya State University (UNESA) and Surabaya Institute of Technology (ITS). HTI offers a unique mixture of modernity and elements of Salafism; they are characterised as rational, but

are also sometimes seen as "irrationally" pious, like older generations. In matters pertaining to religious issues, HTI members seek to uphold textual observance as explicitly spelled out in the most authoritative sacred texts, the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, as the representation of the most "authentic self".

Even though HTI calls itself an Islamic political party, it is not a political party in the conventional sense and is not recognised as one by the government of Indonesia. In fact, HTI does not want to participate in Indonesia's formal electoral political system since it views any non-caliphate government as fundamentally illegitimate and considers democracy as a Western concept that violates the basic teachings of Islam. In a democracy, something that has been declared legal or proper by religious authorities can be overturned through a democratic mandate, which is seen as an unacceptable challenge to God's sovereignty.

HTI defines itself as a political party in a broader sense, as an institution that seeks to reform the existing political system. As a political party, HTI has three major characteristics: (1) it bases itself on Islam as its ideology and rejects any man-made ideologies such as democracy, human rights and Indonesia's national ideology Pancasila; (2) it is a transnational organisation and an integral part of an international group whose branches are spread all over the world; (3) it does not allow itself to operate within the existing political party system since its proponents have denounced democracy as illegitimate.

HTI builds its arguments of the necessity of restoring the state and society through a transnational Islamic state (*khilafah Islamiyah*) on normative as well as empirical grounds. Its proponents construct the necessity of *khilafah* based on the textualist interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. They argue that the solution for all contemporary social and political ills – such as corruption, poverty, economic disparity and ongoing warfare in the Muslim world – is the adoption of *khilafah* (HTI 2003). According to their worldview, all those ills are caused by the absence of *khilafah* on earth. *Khilafah* was the legitimate and enduring form of government in Islam until Western colonialism dismantled it in the Muslim world and replaced it with a secular political system.

In responding to socio-political issues, HTI is known to be critical of government policies, especially in relation to oil price increases, energy issues, economic disparity, corruption and terrorism. They frequently blame the West as being responsible for many of the crises experienced by Muslim societies and nations. By engaging with issues of policy and economics, HTI can appeal to a wider audience among middle-class Muslims, especially those who are based in secular campuses. Indeed, sympathisers and followers of HTI in these campuses are not limited to university students but include lecturers and professors.

By maintaining ideological purity and engaging with important economic and social issues, HTI can portray itself as a more relevant organisation, in tune with the wider issues of the day. This places it as an attractive alternate to other mainstream organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, who are

often considered idle in their response to current socio-political challenges and problems. Despite the fact that many HTI activists have an NU background (Salim 2004), the rejection of the state as illegitimate draws a clear line between HTI and other mainstream organisations. NU, for instance, is well known for its firm support of Pancasila and the unitary state, which allows HTI to claim ownership of the *khilafah* ideology.

The existence of HTI is therefore inextricably linked to the opportunity structures created in the socio-political life of the country. Despite the fact that HTI does not participate in the existing power contest in Indonesia's democratic system, the organisation considers power to be something that matters in order to make the *khilafah* a reality. In its efforts to build a *khilafah* state, it therefore directly challenges the existing power structure, a process known as *marhalah istilam al-hukmi* (power seizure stage).

This process explains why HTI prioritises targeting the legitimacy of the state even as it refuses to participate in the formal structure of power. It does this by spreading its ideology and principles, taking advantage of economic inequality and other perceived policy failures to advocate for a caliphate as a more attractive form of governance.

## The beginning and end of HTI

HTI was founded in Indonesia in the 1980s when a cleric in Bogor, West Java, named Abdullah bin Nuh, invited a colleague named Abdurrahman Al-Baghdadi, a former member of HT who had moved to Australia, to teach in his *pesantren*, Al-Ghazali (Osman 2010). Together with his son, bin Nuh gradually attracted recruits from university students, especially those attending the Agricultural Institute of Bogor (IPB).

HTI began adding members in other cities such as Bandung, Jakarta, Surabaya and Makassar. Involvement with HTI is often begun by means of informal networks such as friendships, family members and teachers. Upon their graduation, HTI leaders formed the Standard Chartered Islamic Study Circle (Kelompok Studi Islam Standard Chartered, KSICC). The KSICC was an Islamic study group held at the Standard Chartered Building in Jakarta. The KSICC also started training programmes (*daurah*) for key participants, held about once a month at the famous Indonesian hill station in Puncak, Bogor (Osman 2010). HTI also began organising holiday training programmes for Muslim youths known as *Dirasah Islam untuk anak muda* (Osman 2010).

In the beginning they operated clandestinely due to the oppressive nature of the authoritarian New Order regime. They instructed their recruits by means of "cells" (*halaqah*), with a policy of not mentioning Hizbut Tahrir in any official documents until the fall of Suharto cleared the way for the organisation to surface. In 2001 they added the word "Indonesia" to the party's name, becoming Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Ward 2009). With greater democratic freedoms in the post-reform era, the group began to campaign publicly and promote its ideology, gaining prominence among young educated Muslims.

The first major public event held by HTI was a conference in Jakarta in May 2000 at which they promoted the benefits of an Islamic caliphate.

In developing into its contemporary form, HTI underwent the following three phases: the first was that of "hibernation" (*tathqif*), in which all activities were carried out clandestinely. The fall of the New Order led to the second phase, called *marhalah tafa'ul ma'a al-nas* (public campaign), when they began to promote their ideology in public. The last phase is *marhalah istilam al-hukm* (power seizure), the end goal of which is seizing the formal power structure of the country (Al-Amin 2017).

When it was still a clandestine organisation, HTI published a weekly bulletin called *Al-Islam* that analysed contemporary socio-political issues using textual analysis derived from the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. During the initial publication of the bulletin in 1993, HTI published about five thousand copies and circulated them to mosques all over the country through its cadres and activists (Osman 2010). The design of *Al-Islam* was simple and readable, making it easily accessible to Indonesian Muslim readers.

Besides *Al-Islam*, HTI began publishing monthly journals called *Al-Wa'ie* in 2000. This journal contained a wide-ranging collection of typical piety-related topics such as *muhasabah* (self-introspection), focus, analysis, *afkar* (thoughts), questions and answers, critics, *hiwar* (debate), *tafsir* (exegesis), *siyasah-dakwah* (politics-propagation), *ta'rifat* (definitions), *telaah kitab* (classical book learning), the world of Islam, and *sirah-keteladanan* (exemplary religious deeds and qualities) (Hilmy 2010). All these topics are relevant to middle-class Muslims (Osman 2010).

In August 2000, HTI organised the first international *khilafah* conference, which was held at Senayan Stadium in Jakarta and attended by around five thousand activists (Osman 2010). The event received extensive coverage by the media and transformed HTI from an elite-based underground movement to a broad-based mass organisation with a growth-oriented outlook. Speakers featured at the event included Sheikh Ismail al-Wahwah (*Hizbut Tahrir Australia*), Ustadz Sharifuddin Md Zain (*Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia*) and Muhammad Al-Khaththath, a leader of HTI. Following this event, HTI began organising activities openly and campaigning fervently for the implementation of *Shari'ah* laws in Indonesia and the revival of the *khilafah*.

In the post-*Reformasi* period, HTI was able to freely exercise its right to organise and disseminate its ideology through public activities, either within its internal circle or with the general public. HTI gradually extended its appeal to wider audience and "captured" members of moderate Muslim organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. Theologically speaking, there is no major ideological difference between HTI activists and other moderate Muslims; both refer to the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* and the classical Islamic texts written by prominent clerics living in the 8th to 12th centuries – commonly known in Indonesian as *kitab kuning*. The epistemological base upon which HTI ideology is founded is relatively similar to those of moderate Muslims organisations like NU and Muhammadiyah.

What makes HTI different from these moderate Muslim organisations is that only HTI fervently advocates for the implementation of a *khilafah* system and *Shari'ah* in the structure of the state and the public arena. Indeed, HTI denounces these mainstream organisations as having been incapable of restoring a state and society based on *khilafah* and *Shari'ah*. In the minds of HTI activists, these organisations have been co-opted by a corrupt secular political system that violates Islamic teachings. This is the reason why HTI feels obliged to take on the responsibility of restoring a state and society based on the *khilafah* system and Islamic state.

NU and Muhammadiyah were initially reluctant to respond to HTI's proposal to promote the implementation of *khilafah* in Indonesia. It is only lately that NU members have objected to what HTI has proposed and made their resistance public. At grassroots level, members of Ansor and Banser, two autonomous militia wings of NU, have begun to disrupt HTI gatherings and start low-level conflicts with HTI followers. For instance, they have carried out sudden raids on religious gatherings (*pengajian*) of HTI attended by prominent *ustadz* (religious scholars) affiliated with the organisation such as Felix Siauw (Kudah 2017).

## The prelude: Perppu No. 2/2017

The government announced in mid-2017 that it would be issuing the Emergency Regulation (Perppu) on mass organisations, and that it would be used to disband HTI immediately. The then coordinating minister of political, legal and security affairs, Wiranto, argued that the Perppu was designed to safeguard all members and citizens of Indonesia from any ideology that threatened the basic values of the state as established in the Pancasila, the 1945 constitution (UUD 1945), and the ideological principle of Indonesia as a unitary state (CNNIndonesia.com 2017).

The Perppu was ratified by the Indonesian parliament on 24 October 2017 and is therefore now a formal piece of legislation. Jokowi's legislative allies voted in favour, while three opposition parties (Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), National Mandate Party (PAN), and the Great Indonesia Party (Gerindra)) rejected the Perppu on the grounds that it violated the principles of law by granting the executive branch authority to ban mass organisations without first going through a structured judicial process.

The Law on Civil Society Organisations (Act No. 17/2013) grants the executive the unilateral authority to ban groups it deems a threat to the state ideology. The banning of a mass organisation, however, represents a last resort after the government has issued two warning letters. If the organisation fails to comply with the warnings, the government can freeze the organisation's activities. Article 60 of the Law states that if the organisation continues to operate despite these sanctions, the government can ban it.

According to Wiranto, Act No. 17/2013, which governed mass organisations prior to the 2017 Perppu, was no longer adequate. It defined ideologies

that contradicted the Pancasila in a narrower way, limiting them to atheism, communism, Marxism and Leninism. Other ideologies, such as that of an Islamic caliphate, were not mentioned, and this necessitated the expansion of executive authority to ban such groups.

The original order was challenged in Indonesia's constitutional court (Mahkamah Konstitusi, MK) on the basis that it infringed the right of civil society to freely organise. Furthermore, the argument was made that the statute could lead to a variety of interpretations and abuses of state power. Yusril Ihza Mahendra, HTI's counsel, claimed that the Perppu contained some "*pasal karet*" ("rubber articles") that could be easily misinterpreted, misused or abused by whatever political party or regime might be in power as an excuse to disband any social organisation not in line with the regime's interests (Erdianto 2017).

Article 59, paragraph 4 is one such example of a "rubber article" that may lead to abuse of power by the reigning regime. This passage states that "teachings or ideologies that contradict Pancasila are among others atheism, communism, Marxism-Leninism or other ideologies with the purpose of replacing or altering Pancasila and *Undang-Undang Dasar* 1945". However, this language is quite general and does not spell out what exactly qualifies as a teaching or ideology that contradicts Pancasila and UUD 1945 (Erdianto 2017). Mahendra also indicated there was potential overlap with existing legislation, which would create confusion over legal hierarchy and applicable statutes (Erdianto 2017).

In addition to filing a case at the constitutional court, HTI also attempted to garner support from political allies in parliament such as deputy chairman Fadli Zon (Tashandra 2017). Support also came from some participants in the 212 rallies (Tashandra 2017). Despite these efforts, the ban was put into effect and any official activity or publications coming from HTI have been considered illegal under Indonesian law since 2017.

## HTI and its relation to moderate Muslim organisations

It should be acknowledged that although many consider HTI to be in opposition to moderate Islam in Indonesia, the organisation actually shares manly ideological similarities with more moderate Muslim organisations such as Muhammadiyah and NU. In fact, a significant amount of HTI followers and supporters are drawn from those organisations. HTI did not simply spring into existence spontaneously; it is made up of the members or followers who come from existing moderate Muslim organisations. This even includes some rank-and-file members of NU and Muhammadiyah at district level who identify as followers of HTI.

Considering the diverse membership base of HTI, one may wonder what would make a moderate Muslim choose to become a member of an organisation calling for a transnational Islamic caliphate. The theory of opportunity structures as proposed by Wiktorowicz (2004) can help explain this transition.

Although they are large, moderate Muslim organisations such as Muhammadiyah and NU are unable to accommodate every Muslim activist who wishes to pursue a position of power, influence or a public venue for expressing their beliefs. As HTI has increased its profile and standing among young, educated, middle-class Muslims, those who cannot be accommodated within NU or Muhammadiyah have gravitated towards HTI and other Islamist organisations. Their NU or Muhammadiyah background often proves helpful in gaining them more important or influential position within HTI, especially at the local level.

Several studies (Rubaidi 2012; Hilmy 2013) have shown that NU has contributed to HTI's grassroots support. In 2006 there was one of the more interesting examples of how HTI has carried out the mobilisation of *dakwah*. During the 2006 Musyawarah Nasional (Munas) Alim Ulama and Konferensi Besar (Konbes) NU held at Asrama Haji Sukolilo in Surabaya, HTI activists were present amid the *kyais* who were attending the conference. They used the opportunity to propagate, socialise and distribute several books and pamphlets that espoused and promoted their *khilafah* ideology. These activists appeared to be well prepared to engage in discussion with the *kyais* in order to defend their more extreme ideology against the moderate vision of Indonesian Islam. Most of them were from an educated Muslim middle-class background such as university students or graduates.

It has been argued by Rubaidi (2012) that the expansion of HTI has infiltrated the heart of NU at both structural and grassroots level. Figures such as Kyai Abdallah and Kyai Sajad from Pamekasan Madura, for instance, represent the ideological shift from moderate Islam to radical Islamism. As a part of the NU-affiliated *pesantren* in Banyu Anyar, Pamekasan, Kyai Abdullah can attract a large audience among Muslims in Madura as he is considered the inheritor of a distinguished family lineage of *kyais* from the *pesantren*. With his students, and in society at large, he campaigned for the importance of *khilafah* as HTI ideology. The shift in prominence from NU to HTI in Pamekasan can be explained by their relationship with Sarekat Islam (SI), which is politically more prone to hard-line ideology than NU.

In addition to the above, one can find other examples of overlapping identity or double membership of NU and HTI. As Rubaidi has indicated, an HTI activist named Sumiran was also a branch head of NU in Ngawi, East Java. According to reports, he is a wealthy local figure who often makes charitable donations to Islamic events and activities such as building Islamic schools or *madrasah* in his region, including giving financial support to *Al-Islam* (HTI's weekly periodical). Due to his interest in HTI ideology and interaction with his colleagues, he was then appointed to be a rank-and-file member of HTI at the district level, while at the same time serving as the head of NU at the sub-district (*kecamatan*) level.

Influential figures in HTI such as Ismail Yusanto, Shiddiq Al-Jawi (pen name for Sigit Purnawan Jati), Rokhmat S. Labib and Hafidz Abdurrahman have ties to moderate Muslim organisations. Some other names such as

Fahmi Amhar, Muhammad Al-Khattath and Ihsan Abdul Jalil also have NU backgrounds (Kersten 2015). The association of HTI activists with NU is understandable since many of them come from villages with a strong NU presence in Central and East Java.

Even though most of them grow up in the NU culture, they often acquire their religious education mainly from campus *dakwah* groups (LDK) when pursuing their tertiary education in secular universities such as UGM, ITB, IPB and UNESA. Therefore, LDK becomes the first point when they have the opportunity to disengage from their traditionalist NU background and start to embrace the ideas of HTI. After they begin to accept the more hard-line ideology of HTI, such students are often unwilling to explicitly identify themselves with a particular group such as NU or Muhammadiyah. Instead, they are more likely to call themselves Muslims without specifying a particular affiliation.

In somewhat the same way, HTI followers and activists also come from a Muhammadiyah background (Muhtadi 2009). As reported by Burhani (2018), in addition to liberal Islam, Muhammadiyah has an ideological connection to HTI, which can be seen from its uncertain position regarding the banning of HTI after Perppu No. 2/2017. While NU has firmly supported the banning of HTI, some Muhammadiyah members seem to be uncertain about the issue (PP Muhammadiyah 2017). KOKAM, the paramilitary wing of Pemuda Muhammadiyah, even provided protection to Felix Siauw, a former HTI activist, when he delivered his religious sermon in Sukoharjo Central Java on 17 July 2017 (Portal-Islam.id 2017).

The analysis above suggests that there is substantial cross-pollination between HTI activists and other moderate Muslims in terms of ritual and theological issues. What makes HTI members different from the others is the ideology of *khilafah*, yet they usually perform the same rituals as NU or Muhammadiyah members. Some of them are doing *qunut* when they perform dawn prayers (*shubuh* prayers). Some of them may even take part in cultural festivities such as communal feasts (*slametan* or *kenduren*), specific rituals associated with NU communities at village level. HTI followers often begin with a more moderate religious education in NU *pesantren*, but once they reach tertiary education level they become exposed to the ideology of *khilafah,* which many middle-class Muslims are sympathetic to. They argue that the adoption of *khilafah* can make their devotion to Islamic more perfect (*kaffah*) than following the moderate ideology of NU and Muhammadiyah. This again suggests that banning HTI may not have the effect the government desires since even if the organisation has gone, the ideology it promotes can find a sympathetic audience even in mainstream, moderate organisations.

## HTI after the Perppu

While the Perppu has dissolved HTI organisationally, it cannot dissolve its ideology. In consequence, even though the organisation has been banned by

the government, its *khilafah* ideology will continue to circulate among the organisation's activists. This means that the Perppu will have made HTI's activities as clandestine as they were under the New Order regime. Its supporters may go back to business as usual, as lecturers, professors, researchers, general practitioners, businessmen and other professionals. They can revive the transnational ideology easily should socio-political conditions make it necessary .

In terms of its sustainability, no one can guarantee that the Perppu will apply across time and regimes. Nothing is unchanging in politics; this means there is a possibility that the Perppu can be withdrawn in the future, particularly if there is a significant support from particular segments of society. The activists of HTI will surface as soon as the situation is conducive for doing so. They will make all necessary efforts to revitalise the ideology of *khilafah*, especially when there is a power vacuum in the state structure. *khilafah* to restore the existing condition of society and state.

It is likely that the ideology of *khilafah* is employed by its proponents to respond to disequilibrium or crises, both social and political. The crises might occur when state authority is on the wane. As long as the opportunity exists, the ideology of *khilafah* will resurface, with its proponents expecting it to restore social and political equilibrium. Based on this argument, the ideology of *khilafah* is beyond the reach of perppu, which cannot kill the ideology, only silence its active propagation in the public sphere. The most effective way of terminating any ideology is not by banning it, but by closing the possibilities of its revival. This requires, at the least, establishing long-lasting structural equilibrium in society and the state.

The question for us is whether Indonesia can maintain its social and political equilibrium in the long run. If not, religion-based ideologies such as *khilafah* and ideas of a *Shari'ah* state may mushroom. This is particularly likely should the country be unable to eradicate structural problems such as poverty, youth unemployment, social dislocation, economic deprivation and political oppression. In other words, the *khilafah* ideology is likely to grow and get a strong hold amidst the social and political crises inflicting the country.

A religion-based ideology such as *khilafah* finds fertile ground in non-religious institutions such as secular schools and universities. This is because religious education in non-religious institutions is not conducted in a critical or analytical manner. In addition, the search for authenticity among students makes them liable to accepting a religious ideology without reservation. For many, interpreting the religious texts in a literal way makes them feel authentic. Piety is then measured by how far a Muslim understands and practises what is explicitly spelled out in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*.

Among the moderate Muslim organisations in this country, it is NU that most strongly resists the ideology of *khilafah*. On several occasions, Banser and Pemuda Ansor – two NU divisions – have been involved in breaking up religious gatherings (*pengajian*) attended by pro-*khilafah* scholars. Such

activity makes it less likely that religious institutions such as *pesantren* – particularly those belonging to NU – and the State University of Islamic Studies (UIN) will serve as fertile ground for the ideology of *khilafah*.

Islamic higher learning institutions such as the State Islamic College (STAIN) and the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) are also less likely to be influenced by *khilafah* ideology. This is because Islamic sciences are taught from a comparative perspective in those institutions and their students and lecturers are accustomed to look at Islamic thought more analytically. The ideology of *khilafah* is merely a regular subject in the curriculum, discussed extensively in terms of, for instance, the history of Islamic civilisation.

## Conclusion

As has been shown, the Perppu was an effective way of dismantling the activities of HTI and the organisation and its activists have had to go underground. Nevertheless, such state action will not bring the *khilafah* ideology to an end. HTI activists will continue teaching and propagating the *khilafah* ideology to their fellow Muslims, only now in a more clandestine way.

The other issue with the state's approach is that the ban on mass organisations may come back to haunt them. Eventually, through the electoral process, new political leaders and party coalitions will take over the government, and they will either roll back the ban on HTI or possibly use this expanded state power to outlaw other groups with which they disagree. The most effective way of terminating any particular ideology is not to ban it but to address the opportunity structures that gave rise to it in the first place. In Indonesia, this can be done by creating a long-lasting structural equilibrium between state and society.

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# 9 Why do Islamist movements die?
## Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia and its decline

*M. Iqbal Ahnaf*

### Introduction

The recent rise of conservatism in Indonesia following the Aksi Bela Islam (defense of Islam) 212 protests in 2016 has generated a growing interest in Islamist mobilisation (Mietzner & Muhtadi 2018; Hadiz 2016). Some have suggested that the 212 rally represents the accumulation of decades of successful Islamist mobilisation in Indonesia. This point of view anticipates an Islamist discourse overcoming the long-standing dominance of moderate Islam in Indonesia. This concern pointed to the ability of Islamist preachers to counter the influence of mainstream organisations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in the market of ideas (Arifianto 2020). While the potential expansion of Islamist mobilisation should not be underestimated, such a focus overlooks the trend of decline that a number of key Islamist groups have experienced. This includes those Islamist groups that rose to prominence as key players in the Islamist campaign for the implementation of sharia laws in post-1998 Indonesia.

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), or Indonesian Mujahidin Council, is a good case in point. MMI was founded in 2000 based on the ideas of Darul Islam (Islamic State), a rebel group that fought for secession between 1949 and 1962, calling for the establishment of a separate Islamic state in West Java, Sulawesi and Aceh (Bruinessen 2002). Even though it shares Darul Islam's objective of establishing an Islamic state, it prefers non-violent means to promote the implementation of sharia in Indonesia. Led by a charismatic figure, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, MMI started an ambitious campaign of implementing sharia at the district level. Over ten years since the launching of the campaign, only a small number of districts had implemented sharia-inspired regulations. Later developments demonstrated a weakened influence of the Majelis Mujahidin, as the organisation suffered internal division and splintered.

This paper examines the decline of MMI in order to shed light on the dynamics between the mobilisation and decline of Islamists in Indonesia. The paper starts with an elaboration of the objectives and strategies of MMI in advocating sharia, the failure of this strategy following divisions within the

organisation, and MMI's involvement in Islamist mobilisation as reflected in the idea of an "Islamic revolutionary council" following the 212 rally. The paper concludes with an assessment of how the Islamist movement might be undermined in the context of democracy in Indonesia. Our sources are based on newspapers as well as writings and speeches of the leaders of MMI published in two media outlets associated with the organisation, namely majelismujahidin.com, risalamujahidin.com and arrahmah.com. These media outlets that publish updates on the activities and writings of MMI and its leaders, in addition to my interaction with leaders of MMI, provide direct sources for assessing the nature of the organisation.

## Origins of MMI

MMI gained prominence in early 2000 when Islamist organisations began to flourish following the fall of the Suharto-led New Order government. This was mainly due to the role of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who may be seen as the most prominent radical cleric in Indonesia at that time. Ba'asyir served as an *amir* or head of the legislative council (*ahl hall wal aqdi*) in MMI before he left the organisation in 2008. Ba'asyir and his colleague Abdullah Sungkar, who co-founded the Al-Mukmin, a boarding school in Ngruki, fled to Malaysia to escape arrest by Indonesian authorities on the charge of propagating ideas that run counter to the national ideology of Pancasila. They found a safe haven in Malaysia and established connections with some terrorist networks in Afghanistan. They then established the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) organisation as the result of tensions within the Darul Islam movement – an underground organisation that appointed Abdullah Sungkar as its leader. In 1999, following the fall of Suharto, Ba'asyir and Sungkar returned to Indonesia and taught in Ngruki. Shortly after this return, Sungkar died and Ba'asyir was appointed as his successor in JI. In August 2000, Ba'asyir, supported by former political prisoner Irfan Suryahardy Awwas, founded MMI in order to push for the implementation of sharia. Many within the JI circle saw this as a reflection of Ba'asyir's softer approach. Some even felt that MMI was a sort of betrayal of the radical approach of Sungkar. For many members of JI, the struggle for an Islamic state should include violence as the foremost approach. However, Ba'asyir took a different view. Ba'asyir believed that, in the current democratic climate, it is necessary to adopt a non-violent approach to promoting the establishment of an Islamic state (International Crisis Group 2002).

To operate legally, MMI softened its rhetoric from the stated goal of establishing an Islamic state (Darul Islam) to that of advocating for the implementation of sharia (*tathbiqus sharia*). This does not mean that MMI had restricted the scope of sharia by excluding the necessity of applying an Islamic political system. It maintained the desire for a comprehensive implementation of sharia by offering an alternative constitution based on sharia. However, to popularise the activities of MMI it refrained from associating itself with the notions of an Islamic state or opposition to Pancasila.

MMI sees this approach as a tactical effort to prepare the *ummah* (people) to accept an alternative methodology, believing that the implementation of sharia will have rely largely on support from the *ummah*. MMI claims that Muslims' right to implement sharia is protected in article 29 of the constitution which guarantees every citizen the freedom to practise their own religion. This reference to the constitution of Indonesia, which is stated in the organisation's manifesto, is a clear sign of the shift from JI's violent approach toward one of legal advocacy:

> It is the right of every religious believer to practise their own religious teaching (sharia) in everyday life. The State has to fulfill this right because this is guaranteed by Chapter 29 of the 1945 Constitution.
>
> (Majelis Mujahidin n.d.)

In other writings, MMI also refers to a ruling from the constitutional court to justify the right to implement sharia. It cites the ruling as follows:

> In ruling No. 19/PUU-VI/2008 on the Judicial Review of Law on Religious Court, the Constitutional Court considers that "Indonesia is a state that is based on the Oneness of God that protects religious believers to implement their own religious teaching."
>
> (Arrahmah 2014)

MMI sees that an important agenda item is to counter the view that the implementation of sharia threatens society and discriminates against non-Muslims. It argues that Muslims should have the right to implement Islamic law but at the same time non-Muslims should be allowed to practise their religions. This constitutional argument is followed by a strategic outline that emphasises the need for a legal implementation. This outline has five steps: (1) studies to provide practical concepts or guides for implementing sharia; (2) countering anti-sharia narratives; (3) developing the *ummah*'s preparedness to implement sharia; (4) creating an atmosphere that is open to and supportive of the call for sharia; and (5) mobilising material support for sharia advocates. During its congress meeting in 2015, MMI reiterated its commitment to carry out constitutional battles to implement sharia. This was reflected in the title of the congress: new era for the struggle of implementing sharia in the state institution. The resolution of the congress stated that MMI would be drafting academic papers for proposing a draft law on the implementation of sharia (Majelis Mujahidin 2015b).

It is not clear how MMI will implement these steps, but one thing that was apparent from its activism in the early 2000s was seizing the opportunities arising from decentralisation, which gave greater autonomy to local authorities to govern, based on local context. MMI sought to support initiatives that promote best practices in sharia implementation through regional regulation. MMI assumes that by implementing sharia in the

regions it will inspire a more extensive implementation of sharia at the national level. This is possible if the regional implementation of sharia is successful. This will inevitably persuade the greater public of the feasibility of sharia as an alternative to the failing legal systems of Indonesia. In the words of the MMI manifesto, the task of the organisation is to "push for the preparedness of the ummah to effectively practise sharia." It is in this way that "conditions required to implement sharia peacefully can be created" (Majelis Mujahidin n.d.).

To achieve such an objective, in the early 2000s MMI allied with a lot of local Muslim organisations to establish a committee to prepare for the implementation of sharia (Komite Persiapan Penerapan Syariah Islam/ KPPSI) (Klinken 2017). The name of the committee uncannily resembled that of the historical committee that had prepared for the independence of Indonesia, "Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence" (Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia/ BPUPKI).

It was not easy to establish a nation-wide movement to promote the local implementation of sharia. Chapters of the KPPSI were only established in a number of regions, which included South Sulawesi, Padang, and some districts in West Java. In Yogyakarta, where the MMI headquarters is located, the KPPSI did not have a committee. In Solo, where many hard-line members of MMI reside, a sharia council operated in conjunction with the government-funded *ulama* (Muslim scholars) council. However, the council was not able to initiate a single sharia-based regulation in the city (Arrahmah 2013a).

The progress achieved by the KPPSI is most apparent in districts in Sulawesi like Bulukumba, Padang in West Sumatera, Tasikmalaya in West Java, and the province of Aceh. In these areas, MMI and other Islamist groups had allied with local politicians to produce local regulations known as Perda Syariah (*Peraturan Daerah Shariah* or sharia-based local regulation). The scope of these regulations is limited to the enforcement of moral and spiritual behaviour and light criminal punishments, such as the obligation for Muslim women to wear the hijab, gender based segregation in schools, the deduction civil servant's salaries for alms giving, the prohibition of alcohol and prostitution, the requirement for fluency in reading the Qur'an for marriage, and the lobbying of government support for Islamic learning in schools. The wider scope of sharia regulations is enforced in Aceh because of the special statue of the province that is allowed under the broader implementation of sharia.

In 2007, Robin Bush recorded 78 sharia regional regulations (Perda) in 52 districts and municipalities out of a total of 470 districts and municipalities in Indonesia. According to Arskal Salim, the content of these Perdas can be divided into three categories: 1) those relating to "public order and social problems", including prostitution, gambling, alcohol consumption, etc.; 2) religious skills and obligations such as reading the Qur'an, paying the zakat (alms or religious tax); and 3) religious symbolism, which is the mainly the

donning of Muslim clothing (Bush 2018). Most of these Perdas, according to Arskal Salim, are actually related to the enforcement of public morality via the prohibition of gambling and alcohol (Salim 2007). Forty-five per cent of these Perdas, often known as *perda maksiat* (anti-vice regulations), relate to petty crimes that originate from vices such as gambling and drinking alcohol. The remaining Perdas privilege Islamic values such as the obligation to don Muslim clothing for civil servants, the requirement to demonstrate ability to read the Qur'an for schoolchildren, the support for Qur'anic reading classes for all Muslims, and the management of alms vis-à-vis the giving of alms (*zakat*) by the government (Bush 2018).

Although the issuing of these Perdas relied on the support of local politicians and the *ulama*, MMI with its network of KPPSI played a central role. With developments like these, MMI wanted to showcase that implementing sharia is not only possible but also effective in addressing social issues such as crime and poverty. The district of Bulukumba in South Sulawesi was singled out as the most successful case, even though the sharia regulations in the district are no longer effective. The KPPSI in South Sulawesi under the leadership of Abdul Aziz Kahar Muzakkar, the son of leader Kahar Muzakkar, was a pioneer when it came to implementing sharia regulations in the province (Juhanni 2006). MMI and other Islamist groups claimed that the implementation of Perdas that prohibit gambling and alcohol had significantly reduced poverty and crime rates in the region. MMI offered some examples as follows:

> Thanks to God that the outcome of the Mujahidin Congress led to a demand in implementing sharia occur in many regions. The province of South Sulawesi is pioneer in this, where the demand for sharia had been supported by all Muslim organisations as well as members of the Regional House of Representatives. This was followed the enthusiasm for implementing sharia in Tasikmalaya, West Java. The issuance of district bylaws on the prohibition of vice, pornography, alcohol and drug was readily implemented. A series of similar regulations followed in other districts. We saw demands for sharia in many districts in West Java including Cianjur, Garut and others. This was followed by Riau, Palembang, Banten and Pamekasan in Madura. In the last region, the demand for sharia implementation was even led by the local head of government.
>
> (Majelis Mujahidin, n.d.)

The MMI leaders saw tangible achievements in these Perdas. This is because the aim of implementing sharia (*tathbibqus sharia*) throughout Indonesia not only addressed crime and moral issues but also normalised sharia implementation – in line with MMI's ultimate goal of the complete implementation of sharia across the whole country. However, as discussed below, many within MMI were not satisfied, seeing the softer approach as a failure. It was this perception that eventually led to the split and decline of MMI.

## Failure and division

As mentioned earlier, the MMI hoped that the implementation of sharia by-laws at the regional level would get round the difficulty of implementing sharia at the national level. The desire to return to the more Islamic-focused Jakarta charter in the constitution, which would oblige Muslim to follow sharia, was rejected by members of parliament, including those from Islamist parties such as the United Development Party (PPP) and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) (Hosen 2005). However, about a decade after the MMI's plan for regional implementation of sharia by-laws was activated, many concluded the approach to be ineffective. The number of regions that voluntarily implemented sharia by-laws had plateaued, while there was no sign that these laws would be implemented at the national level.

Robin Bush found in her research that by 2008 the number of sharia-inspired Perdas initiated per year had dropped significantly. In 2005, the number of Perdas issued was only five, a significant drop from 23 Perdas issued in 2003. In 2007, no single Perda was issued, indicating the lack of interest in sharia-inspired by-laws. These Perdas had become controversial not only because of concerns over the possible violation of human rights but also because they were associated with corrupt politicians. The sharia by-laws have often served the interests of local heads of government to camouflage or distract attention from corruption (Bush 2008).

It is not a surprise that this decline in sharia-inspired by-laws had implications for MMI and led to a division. In 2008, MMI's charismatic leader Abu Bakar Ba'asyir decided to leave the organisation to found a new organisation called the Jamaah Ansorut Tauhid (JAT). MMI leaders said that the departure of Ba'asyir was caused by internal debates to do with the authority of Ba'asyir as supreme leader of the organisation. Other MMI leaders insisted that issues within the organisation had to be settled through consultation, but Ba'asyir demanded autonomy for himself, arguing that the democratic procedure is un-Islamic. Ba'asyir's position as *amir* or head of the legislative council (*ahl halli wal aqdi*) was filled by Muhammad Thalib. However, many members of MMI followed Ba'asyir to join JAT. This marked a further decline of MMI (International Crisis Group 2010).

The direction Ba'asyir took also indicated that he had become disillusioned with the softer approach of constitutional advocacy embraced by MMI since 2008. Under Ba'asyir, JAT took part in rallies to demand that the government ban "heretic" groups like the Shias and the Ahmadiyas. Nevertheless, many members of JAT were arrested for involvement in terrorist activities (International Crisis Group 2008).

This indicated that JAT came about as a result of scepticism about the political processes embraced by MMI, which opened the way for hard-line members, or those who still maintained connection with JI, to return to the path of violent extremism. This return to violent extremism eventually brought Ba'asyir back to prison in 2008, convicted of involvement in the

establishment of a terrorist camp in the forest of Aceh. Up to now, with Ba'asyir in prison, the government has not banned JAT, but it has arrested more of its members for involvement in terrorism. The intention behind the plan for a military camp in Aceh was to create a *qoidah aminah* (leadership within a protected territory) like that of the JI camp in Mindanau, Philippines. The failure of this plan divided JI and JAT members and many of them became "lone wolf" terrorists. When ISIS was established and began recruiting fighters globally, Ba'asyir pledged allegiance to ISIS from his room in prison (BBC Indonesia 2014).

This turn towards violent extremism by former members of MMI might have further convinced the MMI leadership of the rightness of a constitutional approach. But as shown in the following discussion, some members of the organisation became critical of the non-violent option as regional sharia implementation stalled.

## MMI, Jabhah al-Nusrah and ISIS

On many occasions, Irfan S. Awwas, head of the executive board (*lajnah tanfiziyah*) of MMI, emphasised the importance of what he called "the battle of thoughts" that reflected his own critical views of a violent approach, most likely directed at former members of MMI who have joined JAT. For example, in 2013 when establishing the structure of the MMI branch in the Jakarta region, he asked members of the *laskar mujahidin* (mujahidin paramilitary) to fight against injustice, using peaceful means. He warned that:

> the life of mujahid should be worthy of a high price, and lives should only be sacrificed for a purpose that is clearly in line with sharia. Therefore, the struggle of a mujahidin should prioritise that of the mind (*otak*) and not muscle (*otot*). The Laskar should prioritise diplomacy as a tool.
>
> (Majelis Mujahiddin 2013)

Describing his concern at the number of mujahidin killed and arrested, he warned his followers "not to dance to the drum of others. The Majelis Mujahidin has (its own) clear purpose, has a methodology of struggle that aims at a clear jihad." In the words of the current *amir* of MMI, Muhamad Thalib, the mujahidin should "prioritise reason over emotion, and peaceful settlement (*islah*) over confrontation" (Majelis Mujahidin 2013).

MMI translates such a notion of utilising brain and diplomacy through the publication of *Suara Mujahidin* (journal and website) and *Arrahmah* (website) as well as approaching government officers to implement sharia. MMI is also known for publicly challenging those who are critical towards sharia implementation. It has a track record of taking legal actions on those who speak negatively of sharia and the mujahidins. Such kinds of threats are directed at academics, activists and foreign government officials whose statements it considers biased against its own Islamic movement and sharia. MMI

members had challenged opposing figures in an open debate over what it took upon as offensive, even though those on the other side rarely take these challenges and threats from MMI seriously.

It is however difficult to expect the non-violent path will always be pursued, given that many from MMI were recruited from other a paramilitary organisations with extremist origins like that of the Laskar Mujahidin. The commitment towards a constitutional struggle may indicate a shift away from violent extremism, but the possibility for violent struggle is always kept open within certain members in the organisation. MMI is prepared to adopt violent means as its last resort, when it feels that the Islamic faith is threatened or offended. It gives as an example:

> Muslims must be angry when a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad is published. Because the Prophet asked Muslims to fight, it is our duty to fight legally, politically and physically at all forms of injustice, polytheism and evil in this country.
>
> (Panjimas 2017)

This statement implies that, theoretically at least, violence is permitted as a last resort after legal and political responses are exhausted. In reality however, the use of violence by the *laskar mujahidin* does not always follow such a gradualist theory and depends more on practical considerations. MMI has taken part in violent vigilantism against minorities and activities it considered offensive to Islam on many occasions, and it is rare for Islamist paramilitaries to prioritise dialogue and peaceful settlement. For example, in 2011 a Canadian women activist, Irshad Manjid, was scheduled to give a talk at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) and in the office of a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) known as the Institute for the Study of Islam and Society (Lebaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial, or LKiS). MMI, with other local Islamist paramilitaries, threatened to storm the event because it believed that Irshad Manjid would promote same-sex marriage. The event at UGM was eventually cancelled due to the intimidation by *laskar*. At LKiS, the event proceeded until MMI members brought it violently to an end (Tempo 2012).

Often, it is not the principle of non-violence that has prevented MMI from taking a violent approach to opposition, but practical difficulties. This was evident in the case of the burning of a mosque in a remote village in Tolikara, Papua, allegedly by Christian youths, which angered many Muslims. Although the government promised to take legal action against the attackers, MMI, together with many other militant groups, organised a demonstration involving thousands of supporters in a show of force, threatening to send fighters for a holy battle against the Christians in Papua (Arrahmah 2015).

The ambiguity in this is not surprising if we look at MMI's inherent ideology. Drawing on its Darul Islam origins, MMI was founded with a central message that combined elements of both *dakwah* and jihad. The MMI interpretation and narratives of jihad had often glorified the ultimate sacrifice

of martyrdom. MMI's media arms, Risalah Mujahidin and Arrahmah, certainly glorify those killed in acts of terrorism. There are also translations of extremist ideologues like Abdullah Azzam within these media outlets, many of which promote martyrdom (Arrahmah 2016).

MMI has been critical of ISIS, but it showed support to Jabhah Al-Nusrah in the fight against Bashar Al-Asad in Syria (Risalah Mujahidin 2015a). A key figure in this relationship with Jabhah Al-Nusra was Abu Jibril, the vice *amir* of MMI, who is also Irfan S. Awwas' older brother. The 61-year-old leader from Lombok (East Nusa Tenggara) was reported by Arrahmah to be a direct follower of Abdullah Azzam when he trained in a jihad training facility (*tarbiyah jihadiyah*) in Afghanistan in 1985. He was sentenced to jail several times in Malaysia and Indonesia for the violation of immigration policies. The man, whose original name was Fihiruddin Muqthi, was an early student of Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and he took part in the struggle under the banner of Darul Islam (LPPI Makassar 2013). In addition to praising the Jabhah Al-Nusrah, his support for the armed group is evident from the fact that he sent his son, Ridwan Abdul Hayyi, to fight with them in Syria. In 2015, Ridwan was killed in Syria and glorified as a martyr by the media arm of MMI (Tempo 2015). Another son of Abu Jibril, Muhammad Jibril, was suspected of supporting terrorist activity. In 2009, he was arrested for alleged involvement in the funding of terrorism (Detik 2009).

Abu Jibril now leads the Munawaroh mosque in Pamulang near Jakarta. He has been a controversial preacher because of his radical sermons. Another mosque where he used to preach regularly is the mosque in the large Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD) housing estate near Jakarta, whose ownership had been contested by Munawaroh and MMI. Jibril maintained control of the Munawaroh mosque in Pamulang but failed to defend the mosque in BSD (Arrahmah 2009).

Jibril and other MMI leaders, including Muhammad Thalib and Irfan S. Awwas, had met with members of the Jabhah Al-Nusrah on a visit to Syria in 2014. A news report from the newspaper *Risalah Mujahidin* on November 2014, titled "Bumi Jihad Syam Memanggil Kalian" (Jihad land of Syam is calling), covered the 15-day visit, which was described as *ribath* and *i'dad* (armed preparation for battle) in Syria. *Risalah Mujahidin* then mentioned that the delegation met the commander of Jabhah Nushrah, Syeikh Al-Jaulani (Risalah Mujahidin 2014). Maintaining relations with such a violent extremist group demonstrated a paradox within MMI.

## MMI and its role during the 212 rally

The paradox of MMI's stance on the question of violent and non-violent struggle is a reflection of its continuous quest for an alternative path for promoting sharia. The failure to make significant progress through legal advocacies was bound to cause disillusionment and eventually even disorientation among some members, who might then be prepared to return to the path of

violent extremism. In such a situation, the opportunity to mobilise politically, following the 212 rally, gave new impetus to the organisation and its leaders.

In fact, MMI had been closely linked to initiatives at the national level to unite Muslim forces and build an intergroup alliance that would pave the way to seize important positions in the state. The need to fill the structure of the state with leaders committed to implement sharia is clear from the following concerns raised by Irfan S. Awwas in his reflections on the 212 movement. He warned that mass mobilisation is only a way to achieve the goal of leadership within the state structure. He said:

> It is apparently not enough to rely on the masses to achieve victory. The masses need to be supported by knowledge, tactics and discipline … Why? This is because the leadership of the state is not in the hands of the Muslim ummah. The executive, judicial and legislative functions are dominated by those who are contradictory to the spirit of Islam. The infidel leaders and their supporters control Muslims … .
>
> (Awwas 2016)

Targeting the state structure would inevitably require political engagement – mobilisation at grassroots level would not be enough. For this, hard-line Islamist groups like MMI would have to put aside their deeply held beliefs that democracy is un-Islamic. What was needed was a pressure group or support base that would persuade political actors to side with Muslim forces in order to facilitate the promotion of sharia by-laws and leaders sympathetic to MMI.

In the eyes of the MMI leaders, a pro-sharia state apparatus would be welcome. In its 2015 congress, MMI claimed to want to implement sharia compliancy within state institutions. This plan was enthusiastically taken up by its members, as described by Irfan Awwas:

> This new era require a new strategy for our struggle, which means we have to engage more at the grassroots level. For example, the head of police in South Sumatra province called on his staff of the police department in his region to practise *sholat* (prayers) together in a timely manner. This phenomenon can also be seen in the instructions of the mayor of Bogor, Bima Arya, who requested his staff to use government offices for prayers. He also asked his staff to organise more group prayers, prohibit vices and curb the activities of the Shiites. Things like this should be welcomed and supported.
>
> (Majelis Mujahidin 2015a)

One of the ways to create a support base in order to persuade and apply pressure on political actors was to organise rallies and parades. For example, a series of Islamist rallies called *tauhid* parades began to be organised in 2015. These parades used the image of the fist with index finger pointing above as a

symbolic pledge to Islamist monotheist supremacy. The rallies were also marked by large banners saying *La illaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasuulullah* (There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). The parades, which were attended by hundreds, sometime thousands of people dressed in white, were an opportunity to fervently protest against issues of concern to Muslims at large, including the use of pornography, the threat of heretic sects, Christian proselytisation, and alleged blasphemies against Islam. This form of campaigning aimed to encourage the participation of a wider Muslim audience. It managed to attract moderate and conservative leaders like those from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) who often attended the parades. Nevertheless, it was clear that it was the hard-line leaders such Rizieq Shihab, Abu Jibril and Muhammad Al-Khattath who led the parades and the movement (Majelis Mujahidin 2015a).

Initiatives to unite hard-line groups in order to create a support base targeting state structures began years before the parades started. In 2011, for example, Muhamamad Al-Khattah thought of forming an Islamic revolutionary council. The council would be structured like a shadow government. Sitting at the top of the council would be Rizieq Shihab as head of state, followed by Muhammad Jibril of MMI. Others in the imagined cabinet included prominent leaders or supporters of hard-line groups such as Munarman, Maman Abdurrahan, Eggi Sujana and Alfian Tanjung. The list also included professionals and retired military generals. Interestingly, the sharia committee council looked to include a combination of moderate and extremist leaders such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir of JAT and Hasyim Muzadi of NU (Tempo 2011).

Many individuals whose names were in the list denied any involvement and claimed they were never contacted. However, Muhammad Jibril of MMI confirmed that he knew about the list and supported the idea. In an interview for Arrahmah, his response to the Islamic revolution council was supportive, as follows:

ARRAHMAH: Ustadz did you hear about the Islamic revolution council? What do you think?

USTAZ ABU JIBRIL: I think this is still an idea, which may become real. This is legitimate. Muslims have the right to raise such discourse as others may raise a similar discourse about a Communist revolution council, a secular revolution council and so forth.

ARRAHMAH: Does this mean you agree with the idea?

USTAZ ABU JIBRIL: Every pious Muslim should aim to implement the sharia and the Caliphate. It is only non-practicing Muslim who oppose such an ideal.(Arrahmah 2011)

This idea of an Islamic revolution council was controversial and it failed to generate interest from Muslim communities. Nevertheless, this did not signal the end of a belief in the possibility of bringing about a non-violent revolution

by capturing the Indonesian state structure through constitutional processes. In 2012, Al-Khattath had another idea: canvassing Muslims to support what he called the *capres Syariah* (pro-sharia candidate) for president. Again, Abu Jibril was included in the names of potential presidential candidates, along with Rizieq Shihab and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. Al-Khattath claimed that offering a "pro-sharia candidate for president" was only the beginning of a revolution, without elaborating how such a revolution would proceed. Abu Jibril supported the idea but warned that change would happen only by mobilising society, which meant that support from the military and political actors was required (Arrahmah 2012).

The 2014 general elections was a watershed in terms of greater polarisation of Indonesian society along religious and ethnic lines. Ex-general Prabowo Subianto had established a political alliance with hard-line groups that gave hope to those with pro-sharia sympathies that they might somehow seize the state structure through political means. The racial and religious attacks against Jokowi, rallies against Ahok and mobilisation around the 212 rallies should be seen as part of efforts by hard-line Muslim groups like MMI to court public support through non-violent means, even if those efforts did not necessarily contribute to establishing sharia in Indonesia. For others – especially more radical members of MMI – it showed that non-violent means had their limits. It is understandable, therefore, that MMI publications contain not only arguments about the obligation to implement sharia but also writings about the necessity of *i'dad* (self-preparation or training for jihad) and the glorification of martyrdom.

## Decline

MMI's ambiguous stance on violence does not only reflect its proclivity to adopt violent means, but also its disillusionment of its flirtation with non-violent politics. In the eyes of MMI leaders, even the 212 rally did not signal a confidence in a nationwide turn towards sharia. Such scepticism runs in contrast to the growing popularity of a new breed of Islamist actors who are convinced of the tactics of popular mass mobilisation to achieve their goals. Traditional Islamists groups like MMI felt that they were losing influence and relevance. After the departure of Ba'asyir, MMI relied on other senior figures such as Muhammad Thalib and Irfan Awwas for direction. As an organisation, MMI also struggled to sustain its movement. Its headquarters in Yogyakarta is much quieter than before as it no longer publicises routine sermons and protest events. Its bookstore is closed and MMI now relies on online publications of its journal Risalah Mujahidin. The front page of its website still displays the 2105 edition of the once highly respected journal *Risalah Mujahidin*. After a decade of leadership in the struggle for sharia in Indonesia, MMI is now on the brink of collapse.

What explains such a decline? In his book *Why Social Movements Die*? Christian Davenport (2014) suggests that a combination of state repression

and internal movement dynamics may bring about the demise of social movements. The state can kill a movement but a movement can kill itself by failing to sustain participation (Davenport 2014). The latter factor seems more relevant when it comes to explaining the decline of MMI. Apart from Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who was incarcerated when he was still the leader of MMI, the current leaders of MMI are relatively free. MMI also enjoys a significant degree of freedom in relation to its publications, rallies and public sermons. One of MMI's leaders, Abu Jibril, still freely controls the Al Munawarah mosque in Pamulang (Banten) despite his extreme rhetoric and hard-line reputation. In short, MMI may not enjoy political accommodation within the Indonesian state administration, but it also does not suffer from state repression or the arrest of its leaders due to their political activism.

To borrow Davenport's words, MMI is a movement that is killing itself. Three factors are noteworthy here. First, there is the failure of the organisation to sustain tangible achievements. As discussed earlier, MMI leaders had the aim of promoting sharia-inspired by-laws from regional to national level. At one point this plan bore fruit in the issuance of sharia-inspired regulations at district level. However, these by-laws failed to appeal to the general public and became controversial not only because of the discriminatory nature of the laws but also due to the fact that the laws were used as a cover for corrupt political elites. MMI expected that "best practice" in sharia implementation would inspire replication in other regions and even at the national level, but what happened was the reverse. Interest in sharia by-laws dropped steadily (Bush 2008). As a result, MMI experienced a decline that Davenport called the "breakdown of trust", which was then followed – naturally – by fractionalisation. Disillusioned by what the future holds, some members of MMI, including some of its leaders, left to establish new organisation or join other movements.

The second factor pertains to the resource mobilisation aspect of MMI as a social movement. In the past, MMI relied on the influential figure of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir as its guide. His presence at MMI events attracted large crowds. When Ba'asyir left, MMI lost its ability to organise mass gatherings. Even its recent annual congress only required a small and modest indoor venue. The MMI leadership now relies on two figures, Irfan S. Awwas and Muhamad Thalib. These two leaders have authored many books and papers, but sales of their publications have not been great because they have to compete with other online publications. MMI also does not have the ability to mobilise funding through charities or business concessions from local political elites. Many Islamist groups sustain their activisms by allying with local elites who provide concessions in the security business. Unlike the Islamic Defenders Front, MMI did not obtain business concessions from local elites. MMI also does not have figures who can mobilise successful charity events. They also do not run integrated Islamic schools that serve the needs of the growing Muslim urban and middle classes in Indonesia. Their inability to connect activism with the market has led to the stagnation of the movement.

The third factor that accounts for the decline of MMI comes from its failure to adapt to new methods of popular mobilisation that combine technology and social media. MMI failed to update its publication *Risalah Mujahidin* and *Arrahmah* with new content or connect them to social media feeds on influential platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

These three factors have cost MMI its lead in the campaign for sharia in Indonesia. MMI now relies on participation with other groups rather than activities as a standalone organisation.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown how an Islamist movement can be weakened in Indonesia. It has also shown how democratisation in Indonesia led to it changing its tactics from violent extremism to political contestation. The current leaders of MMI are committed to participate in the political process and often oppose the path of violent extremism taken by other Islamists. This indicates a de-escalation of the radicalisation process, even though de-radicalisation at the ideological level or complete moderation has not happened. First, MMI did not completely separate from its extremist roots. When a split within the organisation occurred, MMI showed support for Jabhah al-Nusrah, a violent extremist group. MMI allowed the dissemination of extremist ideas in its official publications. Second, MMI does not completely eschew violence and has failed to denounce terrorism. Its paramilitary organisation still plays a central role in the organisation. Third, MMI doubts the possibility of political change through democratic processes.

Since the departure of Ba'asyir, MMI has shown that it is keen to compete politically so as to establish sharia. Even though membership has declined, MMI is still able to link up with other groups in an alliance. There is an important value deeply held by MMI members, *isy kariman au mut syahidan* (live with dignity in the struggle for the sharia or die as martyrs). For them, taking part in the constitutional struggle to implement sharia may sufficiently represent "living in dignity", regardless of achievement.

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# 10 The PKS and Tarbiyah movement

## Its agenda and future in Indonesia

*Yon Machmudi*

### Introduction

The composition of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) membership has significantly affected the strategy and style of its leadership. The backbone of the membership derives from Jemaah Tarbiyah. While the first Jemaah Tarbiyah activists were mainly of a revivalist and modernist inclination, the current PKS leadership is dominated by the traditionalist group. In addition, activists coming from secular campuses and representing the Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (LDK) have contributed to the political directions of PKS. In order to broaden its appeal, PKS has transformed its Islamic aspirations into a more realistic agenda (Damanik 2002).

In general, the activists of campus Islam within the PKS leadership have demonstrated moderate views, while their experience within student activism has enabled them to position themselves in the middle of the religious spectrum. My observations of the political practice of PKS show the important role played by these activists of campus Islam – a kind of Islam that has developed in secular campuses in Indonesia. Right now, the campus Islam cadres are best represented by the new president of PKS, Sohibul Iman, and figures such as Fahri Hamzah, Muzammil Yusuf and Mahfudz Shidiq. More militant and conservative cadres of Jemaah Tarbiyah are represented by those who gained their educational training from the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Science (LIPIA), the Jakarta-based Saudi Islamic institution, rather than from secular campuses. Since the secular campuses in Indonesia are still considered the backbone of PKS caderisation – that is, they function to develop a group of students into cadres of the party – it seems likely they will continue to play a significant role in the future. Interestingly, all these accommodative approaches within religious and political activities find their justification in the teachings and ideas of Hasan al-Banna, which are mostly rooted in Sufism.

Even though PKS has a relatively new leadership right now, the party still faces many challenges and it is not easy to see how its agenda might develop. The Sufi influence and the Islamisation agenda introduced by Hasan al-Banna and mostly followed by members of PKS has contributed to its

solidity. However, the type of leadership and the heterogeneous membership has led to more diversity in politics and also created some factions within the movement. The current conflict within PKS shows that a conflict that is strongly bound by close networks and solidarity may be particularly intense. Therefore, a theoretical framework on in-group conflict and group structure as introduced by Simmel (1955) and elaborated by Coser (1964) is applied in this study. Both historical and sociological approaches are used, while primary and secondary data are collected through observation, interview and literature.

## Membership of Jemaah Tarbiyah

Based on their previous religious backgrounds, the members of Jemaah Tarbiyah may be categorised into three groups: revivalist, modernist and traditionalist. In fact, PKS shows heterogeneity in terms of its religious orientation, influenced by the dynamics of wider Indonesian Islam. Members of Jemaah Tarbiyah are commonly known as brothers (*ikhwan*). The term brother is mainly comes from the teaching of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The following briefly outlines the characteristics of the three groups (Machmudi 2008).

### *Revivalist brothers*

The *ikhwan* with a revivalist background tends show his or her enthusiasm in promoting religious "purification" and the spirit in relation to a literalist understanding of the Qur'an and the Prophet tradition. They come predominantly from the rigid purification-oriented movement, Persatuan Islam (Persis, The Unity of Islam) and the literalist branch of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, The Board of Islamic Propaganda in Indonesia). Some of them have also gone through lengthy training in Salafi doctrines at the Saudi educational institution. The activists associated with this sub-group are eager to distinguish themselves from the mainstream of Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

Because of the Salafi influence, this type of *ikhwan* perceive their movement as distinct from other established Islamic organisations. They prefer to demonstrate their exclusive views and spread their Islamism into broader society. Despite coming from Persis and DDII backgrounds, the revivalist group within PKS is also recruited from the student association Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII, Indonesia Islamic Student) and the purist student splinter group called Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (HMI MPO, Islamic Student Association Board to Save the Organisation). Figures from the revivalist group are Hilmi Aminuddin, Luthfi Hasan Ishaq, Abu Ridha and Tifatul Sembiring. Aminuddin and Ridha graduated from Saudi Arabia, while Ishaq and Sembiring received their Islamic degrees from Pakistan.

***Modernist brothers***

Many activists within Jemaah Tarbiyah are former activists of the modernist organisation Muhammadiyah. They became attached to Muhammadiyah either because of family background or through educational affiliation. Some of them also hold positions within the leadership of the Association of Muhammadiyah. Activists in both organisations share a common orientation in terms of a desire to return to the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. In terms of politics, they are less ideological in promoting Islamism than the revivalist brothers. Figures from this stream include Hidayat Nurwahid and Anis Matta. Nurwahid graduated from the modern *pesantren* of Gontor and was trained in the Muhammadiyah organisation, while Matta graduated from the modern *pesantren* of IMMIM (Ikatan Masjid Mushollah Indonesia Muttahidah) in Makasar, South Sulawesi, before continuing his studies at LIPIA.

However, after Jemaah Tarbiyah activists established PKS in 2003, Muhammadiyah started to see members of PKS who were active in Muhammadiyah socio-religious organisations as a threat. The involvement of PKS members in Muhammadiyah was thought to compromise the solidity of Muhammadiyah because PKS is perceived as a political organisation that uses religion to further its political interests – in this case, persuade members of Muhammadiyah to join the Tarbiyah movement. Finally, on 1 May 2007 the central leadership of Muhammadiyah issued a decree to prevent the activists of PKS using Muhammadiyah facilities and organisations. Many PKS sympathisers who work at Muhammadiyah schools and social charity organisations have been expelled.

Responding to the strong influence of Tarbiyah within the Muhammadiyah movement, the chairman of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nashir, wrote a book entitled *Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah, Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah* (The Manifestation of the *Tarbiyah* Movement: What is the Muhammadiyah Position?) (Nashir 2007). In his book, Nashir reminded Muhammadiyah members of the danger the Tarbiyah movement posed when it entered the Muhammadiyah organisation. According to Nashir, Tarbiyah is like a dangerous virus because it does not fit the Muhammadiyah movement. Nashir maintained that one of the fundamental differences between Muhammadiyah and Tarbiyah is that Tarbiyah accepts aspects of religious teaching that cannot be justified by fundamental Muhammadiyah teachings – namely, Sufi practices called *tawassul* (prayer through a mediator), *yasinan* (reading a verse of Yasin at certain moments) and *ruqyah* (curing a person by reciting verses of the *Qur'an*) to attract the Muslim community. Here, it clearly appears that Muhammadiyah is questioning the validity of religious practices conducted by Tarbiyah that are commonly practised by traditionalist groups in Indonesia. However, Muhammadiyah's move can also be interpreted as political rather than religious. It considers PKS as an ideological rival. However, unlike Muhammadiyah, PKS is influenced by a transnational movement.

***Traditionalist brothers***

Members of Jemaah Tarbiyah from a traditionalist background are generally its most significant. This group is more concerned with developing the spiritual aspects of Jemaah Tarbiyah than dealing with political issues. With little public recognition and representing the largest group within the movement, they contribute to expanding the influence of PKS in society at large. The current expansion of PKS in the 2004 and 2009 general elections in regions once the stronghold of traditionalist organisations indicates their considerable role in the party. In the 2014 general elections when PKS declined in urban areas and cities such as Jakarta and Bandung, it gained strong support in the rural areas of East and Central Java. In the district of Jombang, East Java, PKS won five seats in the 2014 election compared to the 2009 election when it only gained two (Sutono 2014).

Since some younger members of NU in some regions have started to be attracted to PKS, relations between PKS and NU have worsened. In rural areas in East Java, for instance, there is widespread propaganda against PKS. PKS is considered by NU as like Wahhabi, out to destroy NU rituals. In fact, PKS is itself threatened by the issue of Wahhabi since the Salafi-Wahhabi group accuse it of practising invalid rituals (*bid'ah*) that follow the Sufi teachings of al-Banna.

The current head of the PKS consultative council, Salim Segaf Al-Jufri, who is of Arab descent, comes from Al-Khairat, a traditionalist and influential Islamic group in the eastern part of Indonesia (Baso 2015). Through Al-Jufri, PKS is strengthening the image of traditionalist Islam. He orders his cadres to revive the spirit of Sufi and other traditionalist practices such as celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and undertaking collective remembrances called *dzikir* (Falmigo 2018). Although PKS activists have practised some traditionalist religious rituals, NU still objects to its presence with the organisation. This is because some NU leaders still believe that PKS is a Wahhabi transnational movement that is unlikely to follow traditional rituals in the same way as NU members.

It seems that the presidential elections in 2014 and 2019 played a significant role in deepening the schism between NU and PKS. According to Fealy (2018), during the 2014 presidential election, PKS members played a leading role in the "black campaign" against Widodo, who was supported by a majority of NU members, spreading rumours that he was a closet non-Muslim and of Chinese descent. The party was also involved in active social media campaigns against former Jakarta governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama. Many NU activists have a particular antipathy to the PKS-linked website *Piyungan,* accusing it of running aggressive, conspiracy-laden sectarian attacks on PKS rivals, including NU (Fealy 2018). Even though PKS succeeded in forcing the operator of *Piyungan* not to use the name of PKS on the website, it failed to reduce the widespread hostility among NU members.

Finally, the 2019 election revealed how far relations between NU and PKS have deteriorated. In areas of NU grassroots support in East Java, PKS mostly performed poorly, including in the district of Jombang, where PKS's district parliament seats dropped from five in 2014 to only three.

## The agenda of Islamic reform

PKS pursues its agenda of Islamisation through a mission called Islamic reform. Sufi influences make for a pragmatic and flexible approach, as can be seen in the way that members of Jemaah Tarbiyah have formulated its strategy of Islamising the state. The following steps, as detailed by Takariawan (2003) in *Rekayasa Masa Depan Menuju Kemenangan Dakwah Islam*, are an elaboration of al-Banna's emphasis on the need to take *dakwah* (Islamic propagation method) from individual to family to society. A society that is motivated and familiar with the teachings of Islam will automatically determine the nature of the state (Al-Banna 2005).

The unique character of Jemaah Tarbiyah lies in its attitude to *dakwah* and politics. In general, the group makes no distinction between the two. As a political party, the religious agenda of PKS is much more closely intertwined with its politics than is the case with other parties. All religious activities, including public gatherings (*abligh akbar*), are organised through the political party, combining both religious and political issues. Furthermore, most of the political activities are funded through religious charities. Thus, all members of PKS are obliged to pay regular religious dues to the party. NU and Muhammadiyah find this disturbing because, while they deliberately keep a distance from political parties, PKS encourages the unity of religion and politics. In fact, becoming a member of PKS means not only following its politics but also embracing its religious movement. For this reason, many members of both NU and Muhammadiyah who join PKS later leave their former organisations.

The principle of integrating religious and political activities is not an unusual one for PKS. They believe that Islam is an integral system guiding human beings to win prosperity on earth and in the hereafter. Prosperity itself can be achieved by individual and collective efforts to develop spiritual qualities for the triumph of Islam. The party should function as a vehicle to help people attain material and spiritual prosperity (DPP PK 2000).

PKS activists believe that the religious movement is the political party and the political party is the movement (*al-jamaah hiya al-hizb wa al-hizb huwa al-jamaah*). Therefore, the writings of Jemaah Tarbiyah activists focus mainly on the "politics of *dakwah*", *Dakwah* must be carried out systematically, following well-prepared steps and phases that have been set by the movement. *Dakwah* cadres are not only required to convey religious messages to the members of wider society but also supposed to form "literate and educated groups" who understand the essence of being Muslim and who will act in accordance with the goals and missions determined by the *dakwah* initiators.

This programme for the "Islamisation" of Indonesia is best described in the four steps of the reform agenda outlined below.

### *Reforming individuals*

Individuals should live in accordance with Islamic teachings. They are encouraged to reform themselves and abandon any un-Islamic behaviours. Cadres are required to form families that practise all aspects of Islamic teaching. The teaching emphasises the idea of Islam as a way of life that regulates both religion and the state. Therefore, ideological internalisation is important for the cadres and their families. The slogan that Jemaah Tarbiyah espouses is from the saying of a prominent leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Hudaybi: "uphold Islam in your heart and it will grow strong within your society" (Damanik 2002).

The phase of "ideology building" among new members (*mihwar tanzim*) is not an easy one (Takariawan 2003). However, the pioneers of Jemaah Tarbiyah newly returned from their studies in Saudi universities succeeded in establishing contact with fellow Muslim student activists on the Indonesian campuses. Since the mid-1980s they have trained numerous cadres, the majority from a university background. Targeting students in the secular universities was prompted by the fact that such students were more open to ideas that were different from traditionalist and modernist orientations. These students were not deeply rooted in the Islamic traditions of their parents, and the campus milieus loosened their attachment to any previous religious affiliations. The new ideas brought back by the Saudi graduates and introduced into Tarbiyah were an alternative vehicle for young Muslim activists keen to struggle for Islam.

As mentioned above, the dynamics of *halaqah*, influenced by Sufi patron-client relations, differ from the methods of caderisation used by other Islamic student groups. *Halaqah* is an Islamic study circle that usually consists of around five people. During the cadre phase, members are asked to selectively recruit through the *halaqah.* A successful *halaqah* is one that continues to grow and constantly generates more *halaqah* groups. However, a *halaqah* is not only about recruitment numbers; careful consideration must also be given to cadres' qualities and expertise (Aminuddin 2003). In addition, those who have been involved with terrorist organisations are to be excluded, since it is Jemaah Tarbiyah's policy not to recruit or even make contact with them. It actively discourages its members from communicating with such groups for any purpose, including business activity and social interaction (Aminuddin 2003).

### *Reforming society*

The members of Jemaah Tarbiyah recognise that significant changes towards a more "Islamic" society cannot be built solely on cadres; as described by Roy

(1994: 53) the movement must also gain mass support. Needless to say, they also maintain that the Islamisation of Indonesian society and the state must be achieved by gradual and non-violent means. Creating committed cadres is simply the first step in influencing the masses.

For instance, in the past, Nurcholish Madjid has been harshly criticised by many activists of Jemaah Tarbiyah. A sharp debate between Nurcholish Madjid and Daud Rasyid (of Jemaah Tarbiyah) in 1992 resulted in a strong rejection of the ideas of Madjid by Jemaah Tarbiyah members. Others attached to Jemaah Tarbiyah, such as Abu Ridha, Hidayat Nurwahid and Didin Hafiduddin, joined in the attack on Madjid.

Interestingly, relations between Madjid and Jemaah Tarbiyah improved, in particular after Madjid was invited by the Justice Party to be a keynote speaker during the opening ceremony of its national meeting in 2000. Madjid himself, in order to attract the interest of Islamic parties (since he intended to stand as a presidential candidate in 2004), stated that the slogan "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No!" was not meant to reject the existence of an "Islamic party" per se. He explained that his earlier rejection of an "Islamic party" during the 1970s was prompted by his criticism, as a young Muslim, of the Islamic parties of the time that were mostly corrupt.

The rapprochement of Madjid and the Tarbiyah movement can be seen in more recent developments. Soon after the death of Madjid in 2006, Mohamad Sohibul Iman was elected as the acting rector of Paramadina, the Islamic university founded by Madjid. Iman often praises Madjid's ideas on pluralism – that Indonesian Muslims need it. In 2007, Anies Baswedan was elected as rector of Paramadina, replacing Sohibul Iman. Iman was elected as president of PKS in 2015, so it is not surprising that Anies Baswedan was supported by PKS when he ran for Jakarta governor in 2016.

### *Reforming the state*

Jemaah Tarbiyah continues to enter political institutions. The many activists who have devoted their energies to religious training and *dakwah* activities have become keen to be involved in political issues. Jemaah Tarbiyah members active on campus in the 1990s became familiar with day-to-day student concerns ranging from labour issues to national political problems, alongside religious matters. As a result, they began to read books not only on Islamic subjects but also, more widely, on politics, sociology and philosophy. At the same time, the political party served as a vehicle to further influence the policies of the government by drafting policies of a more Islamic nature (Takariawan 2003).

Through political participation, cadres are encouraged to enter the state bureaucracy and to bring about changes in policy in line with more Islamic goals. The movement has no ambition to foment revolution or take over power; rather, it wants to exert influence through the active participation of its best cadres in cabinet and other governmental positions. The commitment of

the movement to constitutional law is without question. It believes that the only way to bring about change is through constitutional means, involving its free acceptance by the people and state organs. Of course, "change" here is the transformation of the state into something more Islamic in nature. Does this stage entail the establishment of an Islamic state?

In general, Jemaah Tarbiyah and its political vehicle, PKS, agree on the ideal nature of the state: the state and its leaders should merely carry out their duties to God, in whom resides ultimate authority. The state should not violate the rules of God or pass laws that contradict the laws of God. In addition, the responsibilities of the leaders of the state should be confined to providing the people's necessities. The task of the state for PKS activists is: "[r]eforming it to be a 'truly Islamic state' so that it will serve the interests of the people and function as a servant of the people for their sake and welfare" (Takariawan 2003: 92).

It appears so far that, for PKS, the question of a formal Islamic state is not part of its political platform. A truly "Islamic" state need not necessarily be an Islamic state by name but should represent the Islamic virtues, such as accountability, love and care, justice, modesty and probity in spending (Takariawan 2003). However, this does not mean that the party altogether rejects the idea of an Islamic state. Some members of PKS still envision an Islamic state of one form or another. Some still state that, "if not an Islamic state, then what kind of state do Muslims need?" (Ridha 2004: 132). This issue is likely to be a major obstacle limiting PKS's expansion of political influence in the future; real suspicion and a sense of threat has developed among non-Muslim groups and other sections of the Indonesian people.

In order to bridge the disjunction between their Islamic ideals and political realities, some PKS activists are prepared to compromise over the idea of an Islamic state by stating that as long as the state realises universal virtues and functions to meet the needs of the people, such a state may be considered Islamic (Ridha 2004). The chairman of PKS, Tifatul Sembiring, has insisted that the Republic of Indonesia is the final form of the state for Indonesians. A possible synthesis between the insistence by some members of Jemaah Tarbiyah on a formal Islamic state and PKS's more realistic approach of Islamisation needs further experimentation in Indonesia's consolidated system of democracy.

The future direction of PKS will be mainly influenced by the style of the central leadership. The present leadership has showed a flexible and moderate attitude to the development of the nation and its ideology of Pancasila. A clear statement was made by Sohibul Iman on the occasion of the commemoration of independence of the Republic of Indonesia 2017 in front of PKS cadres. He affirmed that the four pillars of the nation – namely Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and Bhineka Tunggal Eka – represent a final form and should not be questioned by the cadres (Kompas 2017). This statement indicates that the current PKS leaders are keen to show their commitment to the ideology of

Pancasila, perhaps because PKS, as a party, is often suspected of being anti-Pancasila.

## New leadership and consolidation

Immediately after the new leaders were elected in 2015, PKS started to introduce a consolidation programme that reduced the influence of the previous leaders. Two problems were identified as an inheritance that did not need to be continued. First, PKS is viewed by the public as too exclusive and conservative due to the main leaders coming from Islamic revivalist or modernist groups. Therefore, the new leaders have sought to change the direction of the religious movement towards something more traditionalist. Second, the previous leaders were very pragmatic in their political practises, which resulted in numerous corruption scandals. A more idealistic approach has been chosen in order to save the future of the party. However, the Islamic reform agenda, PKS's mission to carry out an Islamisation programme, remains unchanged.

Given that the first "carriers" of the Tarbiyah movement were Saudi alumni and its recipients were mostly students who were actively involved in Islamic movements that opposed the ideology of Pancasila, the initial leadership of PKS until 2004 was largely dominated by revivalist groups. In this era, Tarbiyah as a political party still aroused a lot of suspicion due to its relationship with Islamic groups that were opposed to the New Order. Its commitment to the ideology of nation and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia was in doubt.

In the next period, in particular 2004–2015, the leadership of PKS was dominated by modernist groups. As a result, members of PKS cadres who were also Muhammadiyah members often clashed with other Muhammadiyah activists. The PKS cadres within the family of Muhammadiyah were seen as using the Muhammadiyah organisation for the benefit of the PKS. Since then there has been hostility towards PKS cadres who are active in Muhammadiyah. Of course, this is because even though they work within Muhammadiyah, their loyalty is more to the Tarbiyah movement that is PKS. At the same time, some Muhammadiyah elites also need to promote a political party established by the Muhammadiyah activists themselves, the National Awakening Party (PAN).

In the leadership period from 2015 to 2020, elites within PKS have begun to be dominated by activists who come from traditionalist groups. They are more numerous so their influence has become very strong. These activists are from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) families and become acquainted with the Tarbiyah movement when they attend well-known state universities or get interested in Muslim Brotherhood ideas when studying in the Middle East. Their accommodative approaches have prevented PKS from a forward role, although it becomes an opposition force when allied with the Gerindra party. This is a contrast to the previous period, when PKS was part of a coalition

with the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono but continued its opposition style. This behaviour finally induced Yudhoyono to launch a cabinet reshuffle to get rid of members of the cabinet from PKS.

Under the leadership of Hilmi Aminuddin and Anis Matta – in particular after the "beef gate" corruption scandal that involved former president of PKS, Luthfi Hasan Ishaq – PKS showed its conservative yet resilient character. Matta was immediately elected as Ishaq's replacement. In order to defend its position, PKS launched a "total war" against the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) and asked its cadres to fight against the so-called conspiracy (Firdaus 2016). Even though PKS lost some seats during the 2014 general election, Matta succeeded in maintaining his cadres and mitigated further damage from the scandal.

In 2015 the members of PKS's main council held a national gathering and elected Salim Segaf Al-Jufri as the head of the council and Mohamad Sohibul Iman as the president. The transfer of leadership from Matta to Iman was controversial among cadres who felt that Matta had saved the party during the 2014 general election and it was not the right time to replace him. However, based on PKS rules, it is the right of an elected head of council to appoint the president.

In contrast to the leadership of PKS dominated by revivalist and modernist groups, the new leadership under Al-Jufri and Iman has moved away from a revivalist style and towards something more traditionalist. It has also strengthened the moderate and pragmatic approach of PKS in politics.

Indonesian Muslims from various backgrounds (revivalist, modernist and traditionalist) have contributed to "domesticating" the international face of the Muslim Brotherhood into the more Indonesian Jemaah Tarbiyah. In particular, given the significant number of traditionalist groups in Indonesia, Jemaah Tarbiyah has not tried to resist the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood but instead sought to return to the original ideas of Hasan al-Banna for guidance in its political activity, ideally – for fullest understanding – via the Arabic versions of his texts.

While other prominent figures such as Sayyid Qutb are widely emulated by contemporary Islamic movements throughout the world, Jemaah Tarbiyah has limited access to Qutb's renowned *Qur'an* exegesis, *Fi Zilalil Quran* (In the Shade of the *Qur'an*). Qutb's more radical works are not promoted and he is not particularly well known among new cadres. Most books written by Jemaah Tarbiyah activists refer only to al-Banna. To further emphasise the need to return to the thinking of al-Banna, the new leadership of PKS has reintroduced as the slogan of the movement that it is the essence of Sufism (*haqiqah sufiyah*).

These efforts to preserve the original character of the movement have had theological and doctrinal consequences. Al-Banna's traditionalist and Sufi orientation have greatly influenced the practices of the Muslim Brotherhood. Members of Jemaah Tarbiyah brought up in the modernist traditions of Indonesia are confused by al-Banna's intellectual heritage. However, those

already within Jemaah Tarbiyah and familiar with al-Banna's ideas are more accepting of the practices of Sufism, as long as they are based on Islam. Sufism that supports a valid Islamic morality and is derived from Islamic sources is acceptable (Tamhid 2001: vii).

Jemaah Tarbiyah activists are well aware that esoteric Sufi teachings have strong roots in Indonesian Islam going back many centuries. Greater political Islamism would undermine spirituality and alienate mainstream Islam, in particular NU. Thus, instead of criticising the role of Sufism in the Islamisation of Indonesia, Jemaah Tarbiyah describes the famous nine saints (*wali-songo*) from the history of Java as local pioneers of Islamic movements (Nurwahid & Wahono 2001).

At the same time, the teachings of al-Banna are responsible for PKS's "pragmatic" approach to politics. It was al-Banna who often advocated a "middle way" and was keen to avoid religious conflict in order to maintain social harmony. This "middle" inclination was also typical of al-Ash'ari and al-Ghazali, al-Banna's inspirations. PKS activists are quite aware that adopting al-Banna's ideas has led them to accommodation in politics. According to Ahmad Firman Yusuf, a former head of the central board of PK (1999–2004), "most Muslim activists have viewed the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood as too tolerant and flexible in upholding the *shariah*" (Yusuf 2002: 6). Al-Banna based his opinions on the benefit of *dakwah* (*maslahah al-da'wah*).

It is curious therefore that among Muslims PKS is labelled as a hard-line organisation, intolerant of other groups. PKS is often identified as Wahhabi group and even equated with Hizbut Tahrir. This makes PKS face difficulties in expanding its influence in the wider Muslim community. The public cannot distinguish between the Salafi-Wahhabi group, Hizbut Tahrir and Tarbiyah, and this is reinforced by writings such as Rahmat (2008) that connect the Muslim Brotherhood with the Wahhabi movement. Although it is difficult to find evidence of linkages between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Wahhabi movement, this kind of simplification succeeds in instilling the view that PKS is identical with Wahhabi. Both the Salafi-Wahhabi group and Hizbut Tahrir often make Tarbiyah religious and political practices the target of criticism.

The position of PKS as a political party born from a transnational organisation (i.e. the Muslim Brotherhood) makes it easy for it to be included in a category of transnational organisations that tend to be radical. This is despite the fact that the transnational feature of the movement is primarily related to the place of the Sufi group in the Islamic world. Sufism encourages its followers to be tolerant and moderate and at the same time develop their brotherhood beyond territorial boundaries. As indicated by Michael Gilsenan, the political aspects of Sufi orders are represented in their inclination to serve as mediators and peacemakers in a system in which dispute is part of the constant tension born out of the need for security (Gilsenan 1973: 4). The Sufi orders cut across the ties of geography, kinship and tribal affiliation, forming a framework for a broader set of social relations and political cohesion (Gilsenan 1973).

## In-group conflict and conflict with "outers"

Since the Majelis Syura (the consultative or advisory council) occupies the highest place in the party leadership, all committee members of the party need to obey and implement its decisions. The Majelis Syura is also charged with the election of the members of central board committees and formulating party strategy. Members of Majelis Syura are appointed through internal elections held by the central board of the party. It represents senior members of Jemaah Tarbiyah from the provincial branches and some scholars and social leaders. When the members of Majelis Syura are formally elected, they are obliged to swear allegiance to the party (Majelis Pertimbangan Partai Keadilan 2001). In fact, the effort to move the PKS religious orientation in a more traditionalist direction has not faced much rejection from elite circles. The party's policy to marginalise the role of the pragmatic faction that has prompted conflict within the consolidated cadres and elite.

After Anis Matta replaced Luthfi Hasan Ishaq as president of PKS in 2013, he started to consolidate the cadres by launching a war against an alleged conspiracy orchestrated by "enemies of PKS". By embracing a new harsh approach toward this "enemy" in order to save the party from declining because of the beef scandal, PKS moved in a more conservative direction. The conservative image of PKS has bound the cadres to feeling that PKS is under attack (Kompas.com 2013). The ability of the leaders to frame the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) as an enemy increased the organisation's internal cohesion. As suggested by Simmel (1955: 87), conflict with an outer group pulls members of an organisation together and makes them stay together. The PKS continued this approach during the presidential election of 2014. Since PKS supported Prabowo's presidential candidacy, Jokowi was considered a threat and "outer" enemy. This was carried on into the 2019 presidential election when PKS sided with Prabowo against Jokowi.

Of course, at the beginning of Jokowi's reign when Anis Matta, a representative of the modernist and revivalist group led PKS, harsh criticisms were directed at the government. Their chief target was the KPK, which had made former PKS president, Lutfi Hasan Ishaq the chief suspect in the corruption scandal (he was finally sentenced to 18 years in jail). Fahri Hamzah, a representative of PKS and deputy chairman of the House of Representatives, was the most vocal figure in opposing KPK.

When Sohibul Iman became president of PKS, he reduced the level of opposition to Jokowi. In 21 December 2015, Iman and some members of the central leadership of PKS visited Jokowi at Merdeka Palace. After the visit, Sohibul Iman reaffirmed the position of PKS as a leading force in opposing Jokowi's policies but changed to calling it one of loyal opposition. Of course, this visit was severely criticised by some PKS elites, which accused the leaders of trying to bargain for ministry positions. The party then issued a statement explaining the reason for the visit, which was that PKS wanted to open up a better communication with Jokowi. Even though PKS is the opposition party,

it is still loyal to the government when the policies of the regime serve the interests of the general public. It seems that the new leader has started to make peace with the "outer".

The changes of leadership style under the leadership of Sohibul Iman and Salim Segaf Al-Jufri affect not only the internal dynamics of the party but also spheres outside the party. The integration of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology with traditionalist Indonesian Islam together with the experience of the Islam campus has prompted PKS to follow a direction that is more moderate in terms of religious orientation and more idealistic politically. This new direction has reduced PKS's transnational image, which endangers other Islamic mass organisation in Indonesia, in particular NU and Muhammadiyah. Indonesia's current laws and regulations has encouraged the party to pursue more accommodative operations and tackle the stigma of its transnational image because, according to Indonesian political party law, a legitimate party in Indonesia is not allowed to be part of any organisation outside Indonesia or receive any foreign funding (Detiknews 2007).

In addition to efforts to improve PKS's image by strengthening relations with the public at large, the organisation has been minimalising the influence of older figures perceived to be inconsistent with the new direction of PKS under its current leadership. The problem of corruption, which is considered a legacy of the previous regime, is a major task. Some cases of corruption that involved party members resulted from the old regime's policy on fundraising activities. It seems that so far the new leadership of PKS is more supportive of efforts made by the KPK, even though some PKS legislators have become the target of KPK operations. In 2017, a PKS legislator called Yudi Widiana was caught by the KPK and shown to have used the Arabic terms *liqo* (meeting) and *juz* (part of the *Qur'an*) to camouflage their corruption activities.

Fahri Hamzah was the PKS figure most prominently opposed to the KPK and the leadership considered him no longer suitable for representing the new policy. He was asked to resign from his post, but he refused. Finally, his membership was invalidated and he was expelled from the PKS structure. He contested his removal and took the case to court. His case was won at the Jakarta district court but the PKS appealed the decision. He continues to fight against the new leaders of PKS, indirectly assisted by PKS elites who no longer have a place in the new leadership. He has also worked to overthrow the leadership of Sohibul Iman. Anis Matta has supported Fahri against PKS leaders.

Fahri Hamzah's closeness to a Golkar politician, Setya Novanto, was one of the triggers for his removal from his post. Fahri's defence of Setyo Novanto was considered to be detrimental to the party because Novanto is seen as a troubled figure by the public and is heavily involved in corruption scandals. It is unusual within PKS, with its strong tradition of *tarbiyah* training that emphasises loyalty and obedience, for a cadre member to refuse to stand down. The request came from Salim Segaf and was considered by

Fahri Hamzah as a personal demand, not representing the party as a whole: normally, the chairman of Majelis Syura and the president of the party ask cadre members to resign. But Fahri questioned the party's request legally because he thought that the party could not replace him without any apparent reason since he was a state official. Sohibul Iman claimed that Fahri has lied to the cadres and disobeyed the rules of the party. In turn, Fahri reported Sohibul Iman to the police for alleged defamation and demanded that he step down from the presidency of the party.

The rejection of a leader's order by a cadre is a new phenomenon within PKS, a party that prioritises loyalty to its leaders. And "rebellion" was becoming evident at local as well as central level. This seemed to be part of old elites feeling marginalised by the policies of the new leaders . Local branches of PKS that have shown disloyalty to the central leadership include some in the region of Eastern Indonesia, such as Makassar and Maluku, which seem to have close relations with the previous party's president, Anis Matta. They wanted Anis to remain in power. In Makassar, the regional leadership rejected the mayoral candidates recommended by the PKS central leadership for the election of 2018. In Maluku, Gani Kasuba, an incumbent candidate who is a senior cadre of PKS and currently governor of North Maluku, refused to be nominated with a candidate from PAN and preferred to choose a running mate from the PDI-P (Seputarmalutnews 2017).

It is the policy of reducing the influence of previous leaders that has brought about this in-group conflict. While the policy has gained the favour of the public, the attempts to discipline members have created internal conflict. As indicated by Coser, conflict is likely to be more intense in situations of closed relations when hostile feelings are mostly suppressed in order that the individuals concerned can continue to respect each other. However, the accumulation of such feelings intensifies the conflict once it breaks out (Coser 1964: 68–78). Thus, disloyalty and "renegadism" are considered by closed groups as a threat to their unity. In this case, Jemaah Tarbiyah saw Fahri Hamzah as a renegade and an apostate. His membership was finally revoked and he became an outsider.

Nevertheless, some cadres close to Hamzah have continued to support him: for instance, Anis Matta, the former president of PKS, gave him moral support. Cadres close to Matta see Hamzah as a brave individual penalised for holding opinions contrary to those of the new leaders and therefore meriting being saved. In order to challenge the new leaders, Matta organised a new movement called Gerakan Arah Baru Indonesia (Garbi, The Indonesia New Direction Movement). Since there was no attempt to bring about a resolution of the conflict, Garbi continued to try and develop this and recruit some PKS cadres. However, in the 2019 general election PKS was able to increase its vote by 11,493,663 (8.21%), and Garbi then transformed itself into a political party called the Gelora Party.

It seems that the religiously heterogeneous membership of PKS has inhibited some reform steps initiated by the new leaders. The new leaders'

efforts to reduce tensions by creating an "outer" group – in particular with Jokowi – have not gained the full support of the cadres. There are many cadres within PKS, including among its elites, who still hate Jokowi and are unwilling to lessen their harsh criticism. In addition, the attempts to have a good relationship with NU are only partially successful because many cadres still heartily dislike NU's figures (Fealy 2018). Thus, endeavours to make PKS more moderate in terms of religious and political practice and give more room for idealistic rather than pragmatic factions are not easy.

## Conclusion

By carefully following the steps and agenda it has in place for Islamising society and the state, Jemaah Tarbiyah and its political party have developed confidence in achieving their ideals. If the ideologues of Jemaah Tarbiyah have succeeded in solving the theological disputes over the issue of politics and Muslims' involvement in an un-Islamic system, their solutions for internal obstacles to accepting democracy could have the same outcome. Their argument vis-á-vis democracy is very simple. Democracy means the sovereignty of the people, so PKS uses democracy to claim the power necessary to reform the state in accordance with Islamic teachings. PKS should be more serious in accepting the democratic system and pluralistic political system, not only at the level of its elites but also at its grassroots level.

The political actions of PKS are based on the premise that there is no shortcut to achieving its objectives. These can only be attained through the disciplining of cadres and a gradual transformation of society. And democracy provides the way to achieve this goal. Similarly, the pragmatic and flexible approach of PKS in the arena of practical politics is evident in its stance towards the implementation of *shariah* law in Indonesia. This is a further issue that is subject to scrutiny and fierce debate among Indonesian Muslim scholars and politicians.

The current changes in the PKS leadership have not only led PKS to adopt a more moderate agenda, as indicated by its acceptance of Pancasila as the final ideology of the nation, but also led to internal change and challenges. Internal changes made by the new leaders of PKS cannot be fully implemented when they are opposed by other powerful and influential figures within the party. Resistance to the policies of the new leadership by former leaders of PKS created internal conflicts that may threaten the unanimity of the PKS in the future. Most conflicts do not seem to be related to ideological differences but more often concern the individual interests of elites who are troubled by the changes. In order to expand its political constituency PKS has consistently showed its commitment to the ideology of Indonesia and respected the country's Islamic mainstream groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

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# 11 Indonesian hybrid Salafism

## Wahdah Islamiyah's rise, ideology and Utopia

*Andar Nubowo*

### Introduction

Following the collapse of Suharto in 1998, there was a rising tide of religious conservatism and Islamism, manifested as new variants of social and political movements (Fealy 2004; Platzdasch 2009). These movements developed as unintended consequences of the Suharto-era policies of deconfessionalisation, domestication of Islam,[1] cracking down of Islamic state of Darul Islam, the dissolution of Masyumi, and the ideologisation of Pancasila (Effendy 2009). Regarding the Pancasila policy, which forced all organisations to adopt it as the basic philosophy and ideology *(asas tunggal)*, Muslim activists and Islamists felt both humiliated and disappointed – in their view, Islam could not be subordinated to a "man-made" secular ideology like Pancasila. The policy was embedded in the formulation of the Education of Pancasila Morality (Pendidikan Moral Pancasila, PMP), which recognises local indigenous belief systems (*aliran kepercayaan*) and the socialisation of Pancasila values (P4) (Ismail 1995).

This policy incited opposition from Muslim activists in some regions of Indonesia. In South Sulawesi, Muhammadiyah youth activists coalesced around Fathul Muin Daeng Magading and protested against Muhammadiyah's acceptance of Pancasila. Disillusioned with Muhammadiyah, they split from the organisation to establish a new Salafi foundation in 1988. During the Reform Era, the foundation was transformed into a Salafi mass organisation Wahdah Islamiyah, whose utopia is an Islamised Indonesia with sharia (Islamic law) within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia, NKRI). Around this cause, the Wahdah formulates its religious ideology and method of *dakwah* (Islamic proliferation) and *tarbiyah* (islamic training and education) and builds Salafi networks for its expansion from a local to a national organisation.

There are several scholarship accounts on Wahdah Islamiyah. International Crisis Group (2004) reported that Wahdah Islamiyah was linked with Saudi's donor institution to spread Salafism in Indonesia by building educational institutions. Although she does not associate Wahdah with radical and jihadist Salafism, Sidney Jones (2013) is of the opinion that the biggest issue for

Indonesian democracy is not terrorism but intolerance, which is moving from the radical fringes into the mainstream. Jones (2010) further asserts that the terrorist group in Indonesia have mutated from several different organisations including JI, Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), Mujahidin KOMPAK, Wahdah Islamiyah and others that have moved away from the use of violence.

Nevertheless, in contrast to Jones's analysis, Syarifuddin Jurdi (2017) is of the opinion that Wahdah Islamiyah is a moderate and non-confrontational rather than radical and jihadist Salafi organisation. In his other book, Jurdi (2012) admits that in its formative years, Wahdah Islamiyah adopted the transnational ideology of Muslim Brotherhood and Salafism, but later transformed to a purist, non-partisan and non-confrontational organisation and movement. In this vein, Chaplin (2018) has pointed out that in reconciling religion and citizenship, Wahdah is a moderate organisation that welds strict Islamic faith and identity with Indonesian nationalism. Regarding the role of Wahdah's women, Mujahidudin (2019) figures out their important role in society with their ultra-conservative faith and ideology.

In this context, little work had been done on understanding Wahdah Islamiyah as an eclectic and hybrid Islamic organisation which has incorporated local and transnational Islamic ideology and methods of *da'wah* and *tarbiyah.* The establishment of Wahdah Islamiyah shows how transnational Islamic ideologies of Muslim Brotherhood, Hizbut Tahrir and Salafism-Wahabism imported from the Middle East since the 1970s and 1980s have disseminated a more rigorous and stricter version of Islam. In this regard, to contribute to existing scholarships on Wahdah Islamiyah this chapter seeks to figure out the raison d'être of this organisation, its ideology, method of *da'wah* and *tarbiyah,* as well as its rapid ideological and organisational expansion and influence within the Indonesian Muslim community. It attempts to understand how this local organisation is challenging the long-established Muhammadiyah and NU through its networks of mosques, Islamic schools and universities and other auxiliaries. Finally, it examines the capability of the organisation to shape a new emerging trend of crossover Islamic conservatism in the third largest democratic country in the world.

## The rise of Wahdah Islamiyah: its political and religious contexts

After two decades of authoritarian rule, in the early 1980s Suharto took the initiative to foster his ideology of "developmentalism" by mainstreaming Pancasila as the sole ideology *(asas tunggal*). The policy led to a sense of humiliation and opened up old wounds among many Muslims. Such bitter feelings and resentment originated from Muslim's historical losses in many social and political battles against nationalist and secular regimes: the abrogation of seven words of Pancasila in 1945, Masyumi's dissolution in 1960, the de-politicisation of Islam, the de-confessionalisation of social and political life and so on. For Muslim activists and Islamists, the Pancasila ideologisation was clearly intended to emasculate Islam (Fatwa 2005).

In the face of significant opposition, Suharto launched a campaign of military repression and used a strategy of *divide et impera* with many Muslim organisations. In 1984, the military apparatus forcefully repressed hundreds of Tanjung Priok's Muslim activists who opposed the *asas tunggal* Pancasila (Bhakti 2001; Fatwa 2005).[2] Following internal conflicts as a result of dealing with Pancasila, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Indonesian Islamic University Students Association, HMI) split into two contending organisations: HMI Dipo (which accepted the ideology of Pancasila) and HMI MPO (which opposed it) (Ismail 1995).[3] Suharto decided to dissolve all organisations that rejected the idea and opposed him, such as Pelajar Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Students, PII) in April 1987. Suharto's actions against those who opposed him led other Islamic organisations such as Muhammadiyah and NU to consider the matter very carefully as there had been internal disputes about Pancasila in almost all Muslim communities and organisations.

Regarding Pancasila, there had been internal debates and disputes within well-established organisations Muhammadiyah and NU. Within NU, the debate among members concerning Pancasila came to an end at the 1983 NU's National Congress in Situbondo, when all the *kiyais* (Islamic clerics) were persuaded by Ahmad Siddiq's strong conviction that Pancasila does not contradict any Islamic teachings. According to Siddiq, those who opposed Pancasila as the sole foundation of ideology and philosophy were not only mistaken but irrelevant and ahistorical (Ismail 1995).[4] Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah's acceptance of Pancasila reignited long debates internally at the national and local level. Buya Malik Ahmad, former chairman of Muhammadiyah, was very critical toward Pancasila and its ideological manifestations in the New Order era. He termed the elevation of Pancasila in the state ideology a new religion (*agama baru*) (Ismail 1995; Jurdi 2012). In West Sumatra, local Muhammadiyah opposition to the central board of Muhammadiyah was strong. According to West Sumatra's head of Muhammadiyah, replacing Islam with a secular ideology like Pancasila was an abomination against Islam. Muhammadiyah's national board then demanded the chairman step down from his chairmanship as the issue of Pancasila had been decided by the board at the national level of the organisation (Harun 1986; Ismail 1995; Jurdi 2012).

In South Sulawesi, a well-known Muhammadiyah ulama Fathul Muin Daeng Magading (Muin) had been critical of Suharto's rule and his authoritarian policies towards Islam. On the matter of Pancasila's ideologisation, he rejected Muhammadiyah's indecisive attitude. He threatened to leave Indonesia if Muhammadiyah accepted Pancasila as the sole principle (Jurdi 2012; Syandri et al. 2017). Muin is renowned for his puritanical and rigorous understanding of Islam and its relationship to the state. His relationship with Kahar Muzakar, DI/TII's *amir* (chairman) in South Sulawesi, led to the development of an Islamist vision of the integration of Islam in all aspects of human life. He shared a common conviction with Muzakar that Muslims should implement Islamic belief if they were not be a tool of the political

power of the elite (Aldjufri 2011). His puritanical and Islamist understanding of Islam and Indonesian politics was instilled in his young disciples, who gathered in a Muhammadiyah mosque (Ta'mirul Masajid) in Makassar, South Sulawesi.

Apart from Muin's influence, young militant activists were also familiar with transnational ideologies that introduced Islamic revivalism against un-Islamic beliefs and practices with religious and political militancy. Through these Muslim students, the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizbut Tahrir (the Liberation Party), as well as Salafism-Wahabism, an Islamic reform doctrine and movement founded by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) in Saudi Arabia, was infused into Indonesian Islam.[5] Although Shiite Islam is mostly considered as a deviant version of Islam, the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 inspired Muin's disciples with the Islamic spirit of revolution (Jurdi 2012). Qasim Saguni, Muin's disciple, said that almost all Islamic teachers *(ustadz)* in Makassar rejected the implementation of Pancasila as the sole ideology, at the expense of Islam. Islam would always be their life guidance (*pedoman hidup*) and they did not accept Pancasila as their state and national ideology (Aldjufri 2011).

Disappointed with Muhammadiyah's embrace of Pancasila, this group broke free ideologically and institutionally from Muhammadiyah and continued to absorb the theological doctrines of Salafism and Muslim Brotherhood's strategic method of *da'wah* and *tarbiyah.* They viewed Muhammadiyah and NU as outdated, disconnected from people's everyday lives and unable to make a positive difference. They held regular meetings to build an alternative "umbrella" Islamic organisation for doing *da'wah* and *tarbiyah* and recruiting young Muslims. This was to serve as an alternative to Muhammadiyah for Muslims who felt that Muhammadiyah and the Muslim community had contracted various social diseases keeping them away from Islam (Syandri et al. 2017). According to Qasim Saguni:

> As Muhammadiyah has aged, its young children will continue its *da'wah*. There is a saying that in a family, children who grow up want to build their own houses. In this case, we want to be independent. So, we build our own house. However, we still return to our parents' house as we feel that we come from the same root.
>
> (Personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018)

Following their desertion of Muhammadiyah, Muin's disciples sought refuge in the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (the Council of Indonesian Islamic Propagation, DDII),[6] founded in 1967 by Mohammad Natsir whose main objective was to run Islamic *da'wah* to counter the Christianisation and secularisation of the country, including the spread of Javanese philosophy (*Islam abangan, kejawen*) (Liddle 1996). Natsir protected and facilitated their religious activism by founding a new Islamic foundation, Yayasan Fathul Muin (YFM). With the help of the Muslim World League

and Middle Eastern networks, Natsir sent Mohammad Zaitun Rasmin, Muhammad Ikhwan Abdul Jalil, Yusran and Rahmat Abdurrahman to pursue their studies in Saudi Arabia. This Middle Eastern link would be pivotal for this new movement in fostering a global Salafist network and obtaining financial supports for its social religious activism in Indonesia. Zaitun Rasmin and Muhammad Ikhwan Abdul Jalil returned to Indonesia and become the central figures of the movement, elected consecutively as chairman of what was then Wahdah Islamiyah (Jurdi 2017).

Zaitun Rasmin's participation in various Islamic activities broadened Wahdah Islamiyah's popularity and influence. He is involved with several local Islamic organisations advocating the enactment of sharia such as Indonesian Muslim Congress (Kongres Umat Islam Indonesia, KUII) on November 1998 in Jakarta, the Forum of Muslim Youth Solidarity (Forum Ukhuwah Pemuda Islam, FUPI) in Makassar, the Committee for the preparation of Islamic Sharia' Enactment (Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariah Islam, KPPSI), and also with national umbrella Islamic organisations such as the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and the Indonesian Council of Youth Intellectuals and Ulama (Majelis Intelektual Ulama Muda Indonesia, MIUMI). He helped Wahdah expand its ideological and organisational networks from local to national level (Jurdi 2017; Aldjufri 2011). His visibility and involvement in the 212 Action for Defending Islam in 2016 also increased his and Wahdah Islamiyah's popularity among Muslims, political parties and some of the prominent elites of local and national bureaucracy (IPAC 2018).

Under his leadership, Wahdah Islamiyah transformed into a Salafi-inspired Islamic social movement, aimed at transforming the society through Islamic propagation, education and social and humanitarian activism. During the group's early years (1988–1994), Wahdah Islamiyah was more inclined to Islamism and political militancy, adopting Hasan Al-Banna's strategy in education, *da'wah* and politics. Rasmin's influence had led Wahdah Islamiyah to change its orientation and become a non-confrontational and moderate organisation. The group is unlike the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizbut Tahrir. It is not a Salafi Jihadist group whose political agenda-setting is about the enactment of an exclusive Islamic community and state under Islamic law. Wahdah Islamiyah's Salafi-oriented ideology is blended eclectically with Muhammadiyah and NU-inspired social, humanitarian and educational activism.

In line with this moderate approach, Wahdah engages with a diverse number of Islamic groups, especially with regard to Islamic concerns and causes: *da'wa, tarbiyah, ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic solidarity) and Islamic sharia. In Makassar, South Sulawesi, Wahdah played a significant role in establishing a committee for the preparation of sharia's enactment (Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariah Islam Indonesia, KPPSI) in April 2001. Zaitun Rasmin himself was appointed as a chairman of the KPPSI Makassar and other members filled other local and national roles (Jurdi 2012).[7] They have

also been collaborating with the local government of South Sulawesi in term of *da'wah* and Islamic education, notably in implementing local *shari'ah* by-laws (*Perda* Syariah) in Bulukumba, Gowa and other districts in Eastern Indonesia (Jurdi 2012). At the national level, Wahdah is exerting itself in MUI, where Zaitun Rasmin is the deputy secretary of the council. Its sponsorship and participation in the 212 rallies helped increased its popularity, especially with younger Muslims.

Meanwhile, the organisation's size and networks have been growing in 20 provinces and 200 districts in Indonesia, with two international branches in Saudi Arabia and Sudan (personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018). At its national congress in 2015, Wahdah Islamiyah declared its goal of becoming a national Islamic organisation – that is, represented in all 34 provinces in Indonesia. Through a variety of social *da'wah* activities, the establishment of educational institutions from elementary school to university, health care and philanthropy, Wahdah is the only Salafi-organised Islamic organisation with extensive local and national networks. The organisation has also benefitted from financial support from – in particular – global Salafi educational institutions and donors, including the Islamic University of Madinah, the al-Turats in Kuwait, the International Islamic Relief Organisation and Jamiyat Dar al Ber (Charity House Society) (Chaplin 2018; Hasan 2006; ICG 2004). These international links enable Wahdah Islamiyah to connect with global Salafism and differentiates it from other national organisations, such as Muhammadiyah and NU, which are self-financing.

## Wahdah's ideology and method of *da'wah* and *tarbiyah*

Wahdah Islamiyah constitutes a Salafi Islamic movement. In its Constitution (AD/ART), the organisation describes itself as an Islamic organisation based on the Qur'an, Sunnah and *Salafus Shalih* (pious Muslims and Muhammad's companions) with the method of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah* (Sunni Islam). The Constitution of Wahdah Islamiyah (PP Wahdah Islamiyah 2007a) stipulates that

> The main objective of the creation of man is to worship Allah the One God and Almighty. Hence, the Islamic message was sent down to God's Messenger (*Rasul alAllah*) Peace Be Upon Him to liberate all humankind from worshipping God's creatures toward the God of all creatures; namely, Allah the Almighty. Allah the Almighty had mandated His Messenger and his followers to take a *da'wah*'s path to wisdom (*hikmah*). Nevertheless, directing *da'wah* toward the Truth (*al-Haq*) could be conducted in a structured and well-organised manner. Based on this belief and reality, we agree to form a *da'wah* movement following the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* and the Salafi method of Sunni Islam.

In Chapter II of the Constitution (PP Wahdah Islamiyah 2007a), it is declared then that the objective of the establishment of Wahdah Islamiyah is

> to realise and build a society believing and obeying Allah according to the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* and the religious understanding of the pious *Salaf* or the method of *Ahlus Sunnah* and its congregation (*jamaah),* or Sunnite Islam. In so doing, Wahdah Islamiyah is established to uphold *tauhid* (monotheism, belief in one God), to live in accordance to the *Sunnah* (the Prophet's traditions), and to build Islamic solidarity to achieve the good society.

Being influenced by the Muhammadiyah puritan ulama Fathul Muin Daeng Magading, this *da'wah* movement is unsurprisingly in convergence with Muhammadiyah's theological doctrine of *tauhid* and its slogan of "back to the Qur'an and the Sunnah". Muin's doctrine of *tauhid* and his firm stance against all non-Islamic elements instilled his followers with the spirit of Islamic militancy to fight against all they regarded as contradicting the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Nevertheless, Wahdah is undoubtedly closer to global Salafism than Muhammadiyah, which had developed progressive Islamic thought (*tajdid*) within the context of Indonesian modernity, socio-politics and nationalism. Muin and his disciples were disappointed by Muhammadiyah's compromise regarding Pancasila and the state.

Setting itself against Muhammadiyah, Wahdah places Islam as the basic ideology of the organisation and has adopted a Salafi understanding of Islam (Jurdi 2017; Jurdi 2012). Distinguishing Wahdah Islamiyah from other Salafi organisations, Qasim Saguni said,

> We refer indeed to the method of Sunnite Islam, but we do not use the term *Salafi* as many people misunderstand it. We prefer to use *ahlus sunah wal jamaah* (those who follow Muhammad's traditions and his companions, Sunni Islam), as it is mentioned in the Constitution. Although there are some similarities, we are different from other Salafi groups. In particular, we conduct *da'wah* in a "soft" and non-confrontational way.
>
> (Personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018)

Saguni further explained that Wahdah is different from other Salafi organisation due to its adoption of modern management methods from the West. Wahdah has an organisational structure resembling a modern corporation, from national board to branches. They also implement modern accounting methods and use organisational bank accounts.

Furthermore, Wahdah argues that Muslims must return to the original Islamic teachings – the Quran, the Prophet's sayings (*hadits*), and his traditions *(sunnah).* In this regard, Wahdah is a fundamentalist Islamic organisation, desirous of retracing values and cultures from the basic texts of Islam,

Al-Qur'an and Sunnah. They see that Islam is all-encompassing, meaning that Islam must be implemented in a total and absolute manner *(kafah)* (Jurdi 2012).

That said, Wahdah rejects fundamentalism that leads to violence and radicalism. Wahdah Islamiyah condemns radicalism and terrorism of all kinds and has instead adopted *da'wah* and *tarbiyah* methods. This translates as upholding local culture and customs as long as they conform to the authentic values of Islam. The process of Islamisation in Indonesian history has strong cultural undertones (Jurdi 2012). Wahdah Islamiyah has developed a soft method and system of *da'wah* and *tarbiyah* which prioritises cooperation, dialogue and Islamic solidarity and unity. Qasim Saguni explained that

> Wahdah's method of *da'wah* is not exclusive, but inclusive. In many matters, we are not different to the rest of society. We believe that the more we are different from society, the more likely our *da'wah* will be not accepted. We shape our *da'wah* to target different groups, such as farmers, bureaucrats and others. That is our *da'wah*.
>
> (Personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 2018)

The *tarbiyah* system of the Muslim Brotherhood was adopted in three stages – namely, the stage of cultivating Islamic consciousness (*ijad*), the preparatory stage (*i'dad*) of becoming a Muslim preacher (*da'i*) through caderisation and education, and the implementation stage (*imdad*) of organising *da'wah* to create a suitable Islamic society based on the Qur'an and Hadith and the example of previous pious Muslims (*salaf al-shalih*) (Jurdi 2012). The *tarbiyah* system is therefore a central and pivotal concept and practice for Wahdah. Through this system, Wahdah has two targets to achieve: *first*, a normative target, which is a process of preparation of pious individuals Muslim in accordance with the norms and morality of Islam; *second,* political and social targets, which is an effort to create a condition or environment conducive for people to live full of peace and love for Islam. In order to achieve these, the *da'wah* and *tarbiyah* managed by Wahdah Islamiyah should start with individuals, then move to families, communities, nations and countries to build Islamic awareness (*kesadaran islam*) among them (PP Wahdah Islamiyah 2007b).

Since its inception, the Wahdah Islamiyah had developed *da'wah* and *tarbiyah* by building mosques as the base of its movement *(markaz al-harakah)*. A Wahdah Islamic gathering (*halaqah*) consists of 15–20 disciples (*mutarabbi*) guided by a mentor (*murabbi*) in who is based in either a mosque or a university campus (Jurdi 2012). Wahdah actively sends *ustadzs* (Islamic teachers) and preachers (*da'i*) to mosques and local government agencies and bureaucracy, as well as to major universities in South Sulawesi like Hasanudin University, Indonesia Muslim University (UMI) and Islamic State University (UIN) Alaudin. Many Muslim students are attracted by the caderisation

system and are supportive of its mission to propagate the Salafi version of Islam in Indonesia (Jurdi 2012).

Unlike campus *da'wah* institutions in some public universities in Java which are influenced by the partisan ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood or Hizbut Tahrir (Arifianto 2019), the Wahdah campus *da'wah* institutions in Makassar are consistent with Salafi models and methods. They are persuaded that *da'wah* among students is the best strategy for disseminating their Salafi ideology as the students come from different parts of Indonesia. Thus, after completing their studies in Makassar, they can return to their home towns throughout Indonesia and establish new Wahdah branches.

From elementary schools to universities, Wahdah Islamiyah has recruited many students. The School of Islamic Sciences and Arabic language (STIBA) is a key component of its Islamisation efforts and an important breeding ground for Wahdah. By adopting an Islamic and Arabic studies curriculum similar to that used by the Institute of Islamic and Arab Sciences of Education (LIPIA) in Jakarta, Wahdah recruits and trains new cadres and members. Like LIPIA, STIBA has received financial support from Saudi Arabia, and most of the STIBA teachers are alumni of LIPIA or Middle Eastern countries. Students who have studied in the Middle East often end up in high-level placements in Wahdah's cadre system due to their knowledge and competence in Islamic studies, Arabic and the Sunnite theological doctrines (Jurdi 2017; Jurdi 2012).

## Wahdah's Utopia: Union of Islam, "NKRI with Sharia" and Wasatiyah democracy

Since its foundation, Wahdah Islamiyah had been concerned about the lack of Islamic solidarity as different religious tendencies and inclinations often work at cross purposes. According to Wahdah's leaders, disputes are due to the lack of a common Islamic consciousness (*al-wa'yu al-islami*) among Muslims. Such consciousness is a prerequisite for Islamic solidarity (*al-ukhuwah al-islamiyah*) and enforcing Islamic unity (*al-wahdah al-islamiyah*). The establishment of Wahdah Islamiyah, which means "Islamic unity", aims to "seed" mutual understanding and solidarity among Muslims. Nevertheless, there is an acknowledgment that building this unity of Islam is very likely an impossible mission on a practical level as it is improbable that all the differences *(ikhtilaf)* among Muslims will simply vanish. However, Wahdah believes that the unity of Islam can be achieved at least at the level of Islamic consciousness.

Moreover, Wahdah Islamiyah also believes that the unity of Islam can be achieved in terms of the principal doctrine of Islam (*ushul-uddin*) while tolerating differences in less principal doctrinal areas (*furu'*) and building mutual communication, synergy, cooperation and collaboration among Muslims. As Qasim Saguni explained:

> I see that the unity of Islam could be achieved by mutual communication, synergy, cooperation and collaboration. We could sit together to resolve our shared problems. What impedes unity is lack of communication and synergy. The differences among Muslim are normal and natural. But, the most important thing is how we return to the same principles. Islam permits differences in branches (*furu'*) as they could be found in the age of the Prophet's companions. We should be united in the principles. If the Muslim community is united, it cannot be defeated. But if Muslim leaders are in conflict with each other, we will be led by people without Muslim aspirations.
>
> (Personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018)

To pursue Islamic union and solidarity, Wahdah Islamiyah wants sharia to be provided for in the Indonesian Constitution. It proposes the concept of NKRI Bersyariah (NKRI with Sharia). Essentially, it acknowledges the role of Pancasila as an ideology for Indonesia's unitary state, but considers that it is also necessary to implement sharia for the majority Muslim community within that state. This concept can also be found in the espousals of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and its leader Habib Rizieq Shihab. Shihab believes that the implementation of sharia will strengthen Pancasila and the NKRI (Shihab 2012). On the other hand, democracy is more dangerous than eating pork, as embracing democracy is a first step to abandoning the fundamentals of the Islamic faith, posing a far greater threat to the spiritual integrity of the *ummah* than the consumption of forbidden substances such as pork (Wilson 2014). In contrast to Rizieq's view, Wahdah is not reluctant to accept democracy as long as it is good for the Indonesian Muslim majority.

The concept of NKRI Bersyariah is based on Wahdah's belief in Islam as a symbol of individual identity and collective unity. It seeks to further this through non-confrontation based on the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith (*fiqh al-nash*) and an understanding of empirical reality (*fiqh al-waqi'*). At the operational level, the struggle is carried out by advocating that Islamic law should be embedded in regional by-laws (*Peraturan daerah, perda*). However, Wahdah Islamiyah essentially does not care about names or symbols in the implementation of sharia. Qasim Saguni argues that it is more important to implement universal values of Islam such as "justice" than brandish the words "sharia" or "caliphate" (personal communication, 29 July 2018).

In implementing "Islamic principles and substances", Wahdah Islamiyah has played a considerable role in the formulation of sharia in Southern Sulawesi local districts such as Gowa and Bulukumba (Jurdi 2012). Local regulations on zakat, drugs and alcohol have been promulgated. Through building good relations with local governments in Luwu, Gowa, Sinjai, Enrengkang, Takalar, Maros, Pare-Pare and Palopo, Wahdah Islamiyah has established branches there and successfully advocated for the issuance of sharia regulations. Sharia by-laws were successfully ratified in the period 2001–2006 in the areas mentioned above (PP Wahdah Islamiyah 2007b).

Nevertheless, Wahdah Islamiyah does not associate with any political force in the fight for NKRI with Sharia, although it has made alliances with other Islamic organisations and political parties. In this regard, Muhammad Ikhwan Abdul Jalil when interviewed by Jurdi (2012) said that the struggle for the enforcement of Islamic sharia should be done constitutionally, without attacking the legitimate government in anarchistic or confrontational ways. The struggle to uphold Islamic sharia must remain inside the frame of the unitary Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Thus, Wahdah Islamiyah sees no reason to fight the legitimate government so long as the government supports and acts as a vehicle for Muslim aspirations in enacting Islamic sharia in Indonesia. In the period of SBY-Jusuf Kalla and Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla's administration Wahdah Islamiyah had a good relationship with Vice President Jusuf Kalla. Jusuf Kalla is a senior figure in NU in South Sulawesi and has been an important "patron" of Wahdah. He was present at Wahdah's national conferences in 2007, 2011 and 2016 (Jurdi 2012).

In the context of the Unitary State of Indonesia and its democratic system, Wahdah Islamiyah has positioned itself as a moderate Islamic organisation that can bridge the interests of Muslims and the state. In his interview with Chaplin, Muhammad Zaitun Rasmin said, "Wahdah Islamiyah would colour political policies without being involving in partisan politics because it affects the goodness of the state" (Chaplin 2018). He is also convinced that Wahdah Islamiyah can be a role model for society, the state and political parties. Here, Zaitun wanted to assert that Wahdah Islamiyah is a Salafi organisation that champions a cultural and moderate path to Islam and sharia and does not pose a political threat to the government. Rather, Wahdah Islamiyah considers that the Indonesian government is a symbol of Islamic unity that overcomes religious disputes and differences among Indonesian Muslims, as illustrated by Qasim Saguni in the case of determining the first Ramadhan and Syawal:

> The government constitutes a symbol of unity. For example, in the case of the first Ramadhan and Syawal, we follow the government's decision. If the government makes the methods of *hisab* and *ru'yah* interchangeable, we accept it. It is not a problem for us. The most important thing is Islamic unity. We understand that fasting in Ramadhan is a collective Islamic obligation (*ibadah jamaiyah*). So, it is the government that determines it.
>
> (Personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018)

Wahdah Islamiyah sees itself as a moderate Muslim organisation in Indonesia in the mould of Muhammadiyah and NU. Like its seniors, Wahdah Islamiyah is also involved in promoting the concept of Islamic Wasatiyah, a terminology of Islamic moderation *(wasatiyah Islam*) used by the MUI, Muhammadiyah and NU. It utilises different terminologies of *Islam*

*Berkemajuan* (Islam with Progress) and *Islam Nusantara.* Wahdah Islamiyah views democracy as a dangerous Western product because it promotes human will above the will of God. As a compromise, Wahdah Islamiyah supports the concept of *wasatiyah* democracy. For Wahdah Islamiyah, *wasatiyah* democracy in Indonesia is characterised by consultation and deliberation on the principle of a middle path between models of democracy in the Sukarno era, Suharto era and liberal democracy systems in the era of *Reformasi*. Wahdah supports the concept as it ensures Indonesian Muslims can apply their Islamic values and morals and be free from alcohol, drugs and sin as well as extremist and liberal outlooks (Chaplin 2018).

Wahdah is a moderate Islamic organisation and not part of Salafi jihadist and radical groups. For pragmatic reasons, Wahdah Islamiyah seeks support from stakeholders that include political parties and government, as it benefits the organisation's expansion. Wahdah Islamiyah adopts a politically neutral stance, building good connections with candidates who are elected (personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018). Nevertheless, it is critical of how democracy has unleashed both liberal and extremist ideology on Muslim values, promoting drugs and sins harmful to the Islamic creed.

Wahdah's support for *wasatiyah* democracy translates into significant support for candidates or political parties fighting for what it sees as the aspirations of Indonesian Muslims. In the South Sulawesi elections, the Jakarta elections and the 2019 presidential election, Wahdah Islamiyah advised its congregational members to vote for political parties and candidates aligned with the aspirations of Muslims, based on the criterion of good leaders following Islamic law. Qasim Saguni confirms that Wahdah Islamiyah is a neutral organisation but actively engaged in political events and elections as a part of *da'wah*: "We do not abstain politically but are mandated to vote and go to the electoral ballot. We consider politics as part of *da'wah amar maruf nahi munkar* [a call to maintain what is good and forbid what is wrong]" (personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2018).

## Concluding remarks

In the context of contemporary Indonesian Islam, the establishment of Wahdah Islamiyah reflects the "conservative turn" in the country. The phenomenon implies a convergence of various Islamic conservative groups in Islamising the country by the enactment of sharia laws. Wahdah Islamiyah and FPI stand for NKRI Bersyariah rather than an Islamic state or global caliphate. Nevertheless, both agree that Islamic law should be implemented and be respectful of the Islamic doctrines of *Islamiya al-ukhuwah, da'wah amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* and constitutional jihad in order to build the "imagined" Islamic community in Indonesia.

The rapid spread of Wahdah Islamiyah in Indonesia has been facilitated by the MUI, whose membership includes all kinds of Islamic organisation – moderate and conservative – including Wahdah Islamiyah (Ricklefs 2012;

Schäfer 2018; Hasyim 2019). In addition, the political accommodation of SBY-Jusuf Kalla (2004–2009) towards conservative Islamist groups (Ricklefs 2012; Mietzner & Muhtadi 2018) helped the Wahdah develop from a local to a national Salafi organisation in order to advocate for sharia regulations and by-laws. Wahdah Islamiyah and its charismatic leader Muhammad Zaitun Rasmin have benefitted from good relationships with other local and national Islamic groups, politicians and bureaucrats in advocating NKRI Bersyariah and *wasatiyah* democracy.

Wahdah Islamiyah is an Indonesian hybrid Salafi organisation, incorporating both Salafi theological doctrines and the Muslim Brotherhood's system of *da'wah* and *tarbiyah*. It has also embraced Muhammadiyah and NU's approach of social and religious activism, educational institutions and humanitarian action. Its ability to transform itself from an Islamist protest movement during the Suharto Era to a non-partisan and non-confrontational Salafi organisation, adopting the Indonesian nation-state and *wasatiyah* democracy, has broadened its appeal and traction for younger and well-educated middle-class Muslims. Wahdah has the potential to challenge Muhammadiyah and other moderate Islamic groups that have been shaping and dominating religious authority and knowledge in Indonesia for more than a century.

Wahdah Islamiyah is a lot more nimble than better-established moderate organisations, especially Muhammadiyah. In Makassar and other areas, Muhammadiyah has been challenged by the growing popularity of Wahdah Islamiyah, which has been adept at exploiting the weaknesses of the older Islamic organisations. The influence of Wahdah's conservative ideology is apparent among the younger generation of Muhammadiyah members. The catchphrase "Back to the Quran and Sunnah [*al ruju' ila al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*]" is a common rallying call of conservative ideology – propagated by the new "smart *da'wah*" of savvy internet and media social *ustadz* (Sebastian & Nubowo 2019).

It is not hard for Islamist and conservative groups like Wahdah to find common ground with the conservative strain of Muhammadiyah. Wahdah Islamiyah has also established a branch office in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah's main base of operation. This development can be explained by the increasingly critical views of some Muhammadiyah members disillusioned by the weakening of Muhammadiyah's commitment to Islamic education and caderisation. Qasim Saguni attested that many Muhammadiyah cadres have joined Wahdah Islamiyah. Moreover, Wahdah is undoubtedly supportive of Muhammadiyah when it is needed to restore Muhammadiyah's religious authority in terms of *da'wah*:

> I still have my Muhammadiyah ID number. There have also been many Wahdah cadres who have become Muhammadiyah leaders, like Said Abdul Shomad who was active in the Wahdah Council of Sharia. As he wanted to be active in Muhammadiyah, he is officially inactive in

> Wahdah. If the *Tarjih* division of Muhammadiyah – tasked with issuing *fatwa* on behalf of the organisation – needs our help, we are ready to recommend our cadres, especially those who are alumni from Madinah and Mecca, to strengthen that division. So, we have not had any relational problems with Muhammadiyah.
>
> (Personal communication with Qasim Saguni, 29 July 2019)

Compared to other Salafi and Islamists groups, the all-inclusive, moderate approach of Wahdah Islamiyah is tailored to gain traction amongst and the sympathy of Indonesian Muslims, indicated by its presence in various provinces outside South Sulawesi and East Indonesia. By combining Salafi doctrine and Muhammadiyah's social and religious activism, the organisation is a rising challenger to Muhammadiyah and other reformist and modernist organisations. Riding the wave of the conservative turn, Wahdah Islamiyah is likely to become more influential in shaping Indonesian Islam.

The ability of Wahdah Islamiyah to build the narrative communication of Islamic unity through cooperation, collaboration and alliance with other Islamic organisations and governments, at local and national level, represents a distinctive social capital resource for Wahdah to spread Salafi religious understanding and influence Indonesia's legal and political policy products. Its utopia of Islamic unity, NKRI Bersyariah and *wasatiyah* democracy reflects the fact that Wahdah Islamiyah is a new Salafi organisation that needs political support for its survival and expansionist ambitions – from local to national to global Islamic realm. Finally, its ideological hybridism and non-confrontational position enable Wahdah to become a new converging conservative Islamic organisation that could challenge the long-standing religious authority of Muhammadiyah and NU in shaping the future of Indonesian Islam.

## Notes

1 The concept of deconfessionalisation is aimed at accepting and admitting unbridgeable differences and opinions among religious denominations. This concept was initially implemented by the Netherlands government to soften sharp gaps in situations of social and religious exclusivism. In the Indonesian context, it is useful to explain how Islam and Muslims in Indonesia interact with other beliefs and religions and accept sharing and cooperating with them in the name of humanity. Meanwhile, the concept of the domestication of Islam, in the Indonesian political context, relates to the struggle between Islamic and non-Islamic (Javanese) elements in Indonesian society where the non-Islamic elements have successfully reduced Islam's role in and contribution to Indonesian political contexts. See Effendy (2009).

2 The death toll of the tragedy has been in dispute. There have been some accounts on the number of people who were killed on 12 September 1984 in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta. Some believed that a dozen people were killed. Others said hundreds of people were killed. However, according to the official statement of Indonesian military commandant L.B. Moerdani, 18 people were killed and 53 people injured in the incident.

3 The Congress of HMI 1983 still failed to agree with Pancasila as a new principle of organisation, replacing the principle of Islam. The congress rejected the wishes of the government that HMI list the principle of Pancasila in the articles of association. Three years later, 1986, in the 16th Congress of the HMI in Padang West Sumatera, Pancasila was voted to be the foundation of the HMI. HMI subsequently split: the group that accepted Pancasila was known as HMI Dipo (because it is headquartered in Jalan Diponegoro, Central Jakarta) and led Saleh Khalid. The HMI faction that rejected the principle of Pancasila is HMI MPO (Organisation Rescue Assembly). In the first HMI Congress of MPO 1983 in Yogyakarta, Eggy Sudjana (now a lawyer) was elected as its first general chairman.
4 Ahmad Siddiq claimed further that Muslim acceptance of Pancasila as the sole ideology in social and political life was a legal obligation, as the establishment of a Pancasila based-state of Indonesia was the final goal of their political aspiration, not simply transitional.
5 Since the 1980s, Ikhwani and Tahriri Islamic writings have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia from Arabic – including the work of Hasan Al-Banna, Sayid Quthb, Said Hawwa, Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Yusuf Qardhawi, Syaikh Mustafa Masyhur, Taqiyuddin al-Nabhani and Al-Bani. These books were translated by Middle Eastern alumni who had studied and mastered Arabic particularly well.
6 The role of DDII in sending Muslim students to the Middle East and then in shaping the future of Islamism and religious conservatism in Indonesia is pivotal. DDII is the first Salafi organisation in Indonesia; the DDII has been receiving financial support from Middle Eastern Islamic agencies, notably from the World Muslim League.
7 The important figures and initiators of the Muslim Congress (Kongres Umat Islam, KUI) in Makasar are Muhammad Zaitun Rasmin (general chairman, Wahdah Islamiyah), Mansur Sema (academician, University of Hasanudin), Azwar Hasan (academician, University of Hasanudin), M. Qasim Saguni (secretary of Wahdah Islamiyah), Agus Dwikarna (KPPSI), Tamsil Linrung (politician of PAN) and others. Those who were attending the Congress are Abdurrahman Basalamah (chairman of the Foundation of Muslim University of Indonesia), Prof. Mansur Ramli (Rector of University of Muslim of Indonesia), K.H. Sanusi Baco (head of MUI and NU South Sulawesi), K.H. Jamaludin Amien (head of Muhammadiyah South Sulawesi).

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# 12 Creating entrepreneurial and pious Muslim subjectivity in globalised Indonesia

*Najib Kailani**

## Introduction

Despite the abundance of scholarly discussions associating Muslims with the establishment of an Islamic state and with acts of terror and violence (see for example Hasan 2006; Madinier & Feillard 2011), other studies point out that Muslims in many countries have enthusiastically and selectively embraced Western modernity. These scholarships indicate that Islam is being articulated in capitalist terms and identify the phenomenon with the emergence of "market Islam". It is characterised by the entanglement of Islam and market economy and links the idea of prosperity with devout expressions such as creating an Islamic atmosphere in the modern workplace, halal consumerism and welcoming Western success manuals and popular management knowledge (Fealy 2008; Nasr 2009; Pink 2009; Rudnyckyj 2010, Jones 2010; Hefner 2012; Hoesterey 2016; Sloane-White 2017; Slama 2017; Njoto-Feillard 2018; Kailani 2018; Kailani & Slama 2020; Rakhmani 2019).

Scholars have different viewpoints in analysing market Islam in relation to Islamism. Some of them find that it corresponds to conservative and narrow expressions and articulations of Islam, others find that it signifies rational and progressive Islam. Nilufer Gole (2015) maintains that sociologically Islamism can be divided into two phases. The first phase began in the late 1970s and was defined mainly by charismatic religious authority, mass mobilisations, Islamic militancy, a quest for an Islamic collective identity and the implementation of political and religious rule. Meanwhile the second phase is characterised by multiple religious authorities and piety-minded and market-friendly ideas. In line with Gole, Salwa Ismail (2004) argues that Islamism embodies both Islamist politics and re-Islamisation. The former is typified by violent movement to establish an Islamic state and the latter by Islamising the social sphere. By 're-Islamisation' Ismail means that actors are not necessarily involved in an Islamist movement but they are active in using religious articulation and symbols in the public sphere. Re-Islamisation is heavily influenced by globalisation and consumer culture.

One interesting feature of re-Islamisation in the Muslim world is the marriage of Islam and market ideology. Patrick Haenni (2009) introduced the

notion of *Islam de marché* or "market Islam" to describe a growing Muslim consumerist society with an upsurge of Islamic products such as the Muslim Barbies, Razanne and Fulla. He further associated market Islam with the popularity of training sessions marketed to the Muslim middle class. Haenni argues that the supporters of market Islam are more interested in grounding Islamic principles in a secular context, and he links this with the constitution of a cosmopolitan and conservative bourgeois class which is based on Muslim Salafi ideology. As a result, the religious expression of market Islam proponents is characteristically conservative, market-friendly, individualistic and consumerist (see also Sloane-White 2017).

Rudnyckyj (2008, 2009 and 2010) has used the notion of market Islam to explain the phenomenon of training sessions based on "emotional spiritual quotient" (ESQ) carried out by Ary Ginanjar in Indonesia. The training sessions combine Islamic ethics and modern business management techniques. In contrast to Haenni, Rudnyckyj considers that market Islam in Indonesia supports a progressive worldview in which Islamic virtues are being taught in a way that complements globalisation and modernity. A similar argument has been developed by Hoesterey (2012, 2016). He states that the rubric of 'market Islam' is useful for understanding the phenomenon of Abdullah Gymnastiar and his training sessions at Daarut Tauhid, especially the practice of *menajemen qalbu* (management of the heart). Hoesterey claims that Abdullah Gymnastiar has created a kind of religious authority through his ability to transform diverse forms of psychological knowledge into Islamic religious wisdom.

What all these analyses have in common is the idea that Islam has recently been mobilised, interpreted and articulated in a way that is friendly and compatible with globalisation and market economics. However, based on the existing literature it is still unclear whether market Islam represents a modification of existing Islamic ideology or an entirely new ideological strain. In order to contribute to the existing scholarships, this chapter examines the development and circulation of Islamic success manuals and training sessions concerning the production of entrepreneurial and pious Muslim subjectivities in a globalised Indonesia. Instead of associating the phenomenon with the rise of Islamism, I argue that the massive circulation of Islamic success manuals and training sessions among Indonesia's Muslims have cultivated and facilitated the idea of "Muslimism" (Cevic 2016), which refers to market and individual-oriented piety that is apart from state or community-centred Islamism

In addition, this chapter also demonstrates how the popularity of training sessions and success manuals that emphasise self-fulfilment and self-development began increasing in the late New Order and is linked to the economic crisis in 1997 and the boom in Western self-help literatures, especially in America in the 1990s. At the time, the translation of management and pop psychological literatures from both Western and Middle Eastern writers stimulated the rise of Islamic training sessions and success manual literatures in

contemporary Indonesia. This chapter begins by exploring the development of Islamic success manual literatures from the late New Order to the present day, then provides ethnographic data on Islamic sessions delivered by Ippho Santosa and Agus Pramono. Finally, the chapter concludes that market Islam in contemporary Indonesia is closely related to the idea of "Muslimism" – that is, being Muslim and modern in changing Indonesia.

## The development of self-help literatures in Indonesia

The development of success manuals and self-help literatures in Indonesia seems to have started in the late 1990s. It began with the translation of Western pop psychological books on self-development and self-fashioning in modern life such as Steven. R Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*,[1] Jack Canfield's *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and Kiyosaki's *Rich Dad and Poor Dad*.[2]

I argue that the translation of these titles in the late 1990s was related to two things. First, the Asian financial crisis in 1997 created unstable economic conditions in Indonesia. Many companies went bankrupt and many people became unemployed. In the face of challenging economic circumstances, many people may have found these self-help books useful in dealing with difficult circumstances and as motivation for overcoming their anxieties. Second, established publishing houses saw the crisis as a good opportunity to market self-help books and increase their profit.

These books tended to emphasise "micro" projects – namely, self-fulfilment and development – which allowed people to focus on narrow goals that they could actually accomplish, even as the wider economy was in trouble. As the market grew, established publishers such as Gramedia and Mizan realised the potential and began targeting disillusioned middle-class Indonesians. This was also a continuation of a trend going back to the 1980s, with increasing numbers of foreign books – mainly crime fiction, children's literature and books on management and pop psychology – being translated into Bahasa Indonesia and sold to domestic consumers (Watson 2005, Sen and Hill 2007). The Asian financial crisis created an opportunity to begin adding self-help books to the list.

In that sense, the translation of self-help books into the Indonesian language was also driven by the growth of the global self-help industry. Micki McGee (2005) has pointed out that self-help literatures which stressed self-invention and self-development became a popular and significant industry in American society in the 1990s. She has argued that the boom in self-help literature during that time was connected to the "new insecurity" of Americans then with respect to jobs and family cohesion.

The translation of Western self-help literatures was subsequently followed by the rise of Indonesian writers who appropriated those styles and ideas. The writers strove to adapt the styles and ideas of American self-help books for an Indonesian context. One prominent Indonesian self-help book author was

Andrias Harefa (1998, 2000). He started his career as a human resource development (HRD) consultant in Dale Carnegie training in Indonesia. Since 1998 he has published several motivational books which have been influenced by Western self-help writers such as Steven R. Covey and Dale Carnegie. Other writers borrowed more directly from their Western peers while highlighting the importance of local ideas – for example, Pitoyo Amrih, who published *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Versi Semar dan Pandawa* (2008).

Nigel Thrift (1997) suggest the massive circulation of management knowledge around the world is one effect of the popularity of capitalist ideas. He maintains that these books have found a large market thanks to the development of formal business education, the emergence of management and business consultancy, the massive circulation of popular management knowledge and the emergence of self-help gurus. Increasingly, such works are also being disseminated through tapes, videos, publications and business seminars around the world.

However, Thrift's argument does not explain how people in different regions and contexts receive and adopt this management knowledge. For that, Appadurai's cultural globalisation theory helps us to understand the process of how people receive, appropriate and use management knowledge. Appadurai (1996) maintains that globalisation has enabled people to not only experience similar events in different part of the world but also live through disjuncture and difference. In the context of Muslim countries, the disjuncture and difference in receiving management knowledge is manifested through appropriation and adoption that incorporate Islamic values. The following section will describe the development of Islamic success manuals and self-help literatures in Indonesia.

## Various genres of Indonesia Islamic self-help literature

Watson (2005) has described how most Islamic publishing houses that grew up in the early 1980s in Indonesia published translated books written by Western and Middle Eastern scholars such as John L. Esposito, Sayyed Hosen Nasr, Sayyid Qutb, Al Maududi and Yusuf Al-Qardawi. The steady development of the Islamic publication industry in the 1990s was related to the changing socio-political stance of the New Order towards Islam, which became more permissive toward public dissemination of Islamic materials (George 1998).

Although translated self-help books began appearing in the 1990s, the Islamic self-help industry really took off in the post-reform period. Muzakki (2009) has mapped six popular genres during this time: Islamic teen lit, Islamic kid lit, popular Sufistic literature, religious-cum-scientific books, Islamic novels, and Islamic how-to literature. He defined the Islamic how-to genre as that which "presents Islamic teachings in a very practical way that people can make use of as a 'manual' for day to day life". According to him, the most

popular title from this genre is *La Tahzan* (Don't Be Sad) written by Saudi Arabian Salafist, Dr 'Aidh al-Qarni. This book has been translated into at least 29 languages. The Indonesian translated version of Aidh al-Qarni's *La Tahzan* started to appear in Indonesian bookstores in 2003. It is published by Al-Qisthi Press. The popularity of this and similar books spurred on Indonesian writers to copy the themes and ideas and adapt them for a local context (see Hefner 2012; Kenney 2015).

While Watson and Muzakki have helped trace the development of the Islamic publishing industry, the latest developments in Islamic self-help literatures in contemporary Indonesia have been under-studied in my opinion. In order to contribute to the existing literature, I am classifying recent Islamic self-help literatures according to the issues they deal with.

The first is Muslim personal development books and the second is success manuals for Muslims. The former addresses everyday issues and Muslim attitudes in facing contemporary challenges in a globalised Indonesia. This type of book is usually promoted by Muslim writers who are active in campus *dakwah* activities and who are primarily concerned with moral issues and their effect on Muslim youth. These books, largely pop psychological in nature, provide advice and guidance for young Muslims that make reference to Islamic principles in navigating modern social issues such as *pacaran* (dating), self-confidence and guidance for proper Muslim conduct. Moreover, those books feature tips which are packaged in more casual, accessible language meant to appeal to teenage readers.

The second genre is success manuals for Muslims, which focus mainly on how to become financially successful while remaining religiously devout. The main characteristic of this genre, similar to the works of Steven R. Covey and Robert T. Kiyosaki, is that success can be attained through a strong work ethic, discipline and honesty. In addition, this genre stresses religious legitimacy through Islamic virtues which are suitable and compatible with the spirit of neoliberalism (Rudnyckyj 2010).

## Islamic training sessions: Ippho Santosa and Agus Pramono

In addition to publishing, several Indonesian self-help writers also provide training to encourage entrepreneurial and pious Muslims and help them realise their business potential. Some popular Indonesian figures in this line are Ippho Santosa and Agus Pramono.

Ippho Santosa is a motivational writer and speaker. He has written several books encouraging people to become rich and pious, but his bestseller is *Tujuh Keajaiban Rezeki* (Seven Miracles of Good Fortune) (2010). The title of this book is obviously reminiscent of Stephen R. Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Tujuh Keajaiban Rezeki* explores seven ways to pursue a blessed fortune – namely, being self-confident, having a harmonious family, utilising the right side of your brain, hospitality, being pious, promoting endeavour and self-branding. These seven methods are linked to Islamic

teachings such as the virtue of prayer (*doa), sedekah* (voluntary alms giving), *dhuha* (optional bright time prayer) and respect for parents (*birrul waalidain).* *Tujuh Keajaiban Rezeki* cites religious texts from the *Hadith* and *Qur'an* and weds them to statements by popular businessmen and management gurus such as Robert Kiyosaki and Stephen R. Covey.

Following the success of *Tujuh Keajaiban Rezeki*, in 2012 Ippho Santosa started a seminar series of the same name. The seminar was designed to be more engaging and appeal to a wide audience and consisted of a two-hour presentation complemented by PowerPoints and videos. Ippho Santosa's *Tujuh Keajaiban Rezeki* has been presented to companies such as Garuda Indonesia, Indonesia Post and Telkomsel, as well as universities.

Ippho's seminar uses religious commitment as a way to make a living that is aligned with Islamic beliefs. He emphasises the importance of *sedekah, dhuha* and respect for parents. In his seminars Ippho regularly accentuates the idea that Islam promotes prosperity for its adherents. He mentions that becoming an entrepreneur can make a Muslim wealthier. He justifies this by noting that Prophet Muhammad was rich and used his wealth to carry out good deeds:

> Being rich is one of the essential messages of Islam. By living wealthy we can worship God conveniently. Conversely living as an indigent tends to bring us closer to disloyalty to God. The Prophet Muhammad as a good moral example for us as he was a successful trader and rich. He offered forty camels as a dowry for Khadijah. He also had a good camel as a vehicle named Al-Qashwa. If we compare this to our present day, it is similar to the newest Mercedes-Benz or at least Toyota Alphard. Do not avoid being rich. If you are rich you can carry out alms giving (*zakat*) and voluntary alms giving (*sedekah*).

I have attended Ippho's seminars in Indonesia and Australia during which he stressed the significant role of prayer (*doa*). In this session, the attendees were asked to stand up, find someone who was sitting next to them, and shake their hand. Then he encouraged his seminar attendees to pray with one another. This session illuminated the idea that prayer has a significant role in seeking a blessed livelihood. The following illustrates the message of this session:

> "Please stand up and find someone who is sitting next to you," requested Ippho Santosa, during his presentation of the business motivation seminar Seven Miracle of Good Fortune. "Find a partner of the same gender as you; a male needs to find a male friend and female needs to find a female friend. Once you have done so, I need you to shake each other's hand, close your eyes and follow my words: 'My brother, for God's sake I am sincerely praying for you to God so that you will have a blessed livelihood, a wealthy life, a harmonious family and also have good children.

> I completely believe that you are also sincerely praying to God for my blessed livelihood, a wealthy life, a harmonious family and having good children. My brother, God willing, we can realise all of our aspirations and hopes because we support each other.'" Afterwards, Ippho Santosa asked the audience to hug one another. "Who has shed tears? Who has felt an emotional moment?" Ippho Santosa asked. Some members of the audience raised their hands. "Why?" he questioned. One audience testified that she had shed tears because she felt that she had sincerely prayed for her friend. Ippho Santosa reinforced her view. He addressed the emotions of the audience during these sessions and suggested that they were due to the fact that "we pray for each other, we support one another. If we envy each other's achievement in material prosperity it will prevent us from realising our fortune."

The other part of the Seven Miracle of Good Fortune seminar was a section about respecting parents. In this session he turned off the lights and asked the audiences to focus on listening to a voice recording. The recording invited the audience to reflect on the role of their parents from their childhood to them becoming adults. During this session many audience members cried and sobbed. The final session was about voluntary alms giving (*sedekah*). Ippho Santosa emphasised the idea that *sedekah* was a method of gaining spiritual and material wealth.

The dramatic moments in the business motivation seminar described above are widely used by motivational speakers in Indonesia. Daromir Rudnyckyj (2011) in his study of Ary Ginanjar's emotional and spiritual quotient (ESQ) training among Krakatau Steel factory employees demonstrates that the training places the audience in dramatic situations. The trainer directs the attendees to reflect and contemplate their lives in relation to God, family and commitment to work. The ESQ trainer also uses multimedia technology to magnify the emotional effect on audiences.

Rudnyckyj (2011) has called this phenomenon "governing through affect". It refers to the mobilisation of affects to govern subjects. The affective intervention of ESQ training, according to Rudnyckyj, was significant for Krakatau employees. In his comparative observation of Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits* and ESQ training among the Krakatau Steel employees, Rudnyckyj also highlights the positive impact of what he calls "affective intervention" of ESQ on employees (Rudnyckyj 2014).

In his seminars, Ippho Santosa frequently quotes Islamic scripture. He frequently emphasizes that he is not an *ustadz* (Muslim cleric), but he assures his audience that the Islamic teachings he presents are taken from reputable Islamic sources including publications written by religious scholars. Instead of quoting the original Islamic texts, he paraphrases their meaning. For example, when he addresses the idea that voluntary alms giving (*sedekah*) will make people wealthy, he relates the content of a *Hadith* which suggests that wealth never decreases due to *sedekah* – on the contrary, it increases. In brief,

his aim is to assure his audience that all his presentations are based on foundational religious scriptures that add to the credibility of his seminar.

I found that Ippho Santosa's followers come from middle-class, well-educated backgrounds. They are typically university students and graduates, government employees and businessmen from small and medium-sized enterprises. I interviewed some of them. A couple of Ippho Santosa's seminar attendees, Dinda and Isda,[3] mentioned to me that they were attracted to Ippho Santosa's seminar because he provided a moral justification for becoming rich within an Islamic subjectivity. Dinda told me:

> My grandmother who was a religious teacher taught me that Islam does not recommend that Muslims become rich. She said that wealth would delay the entry of Muslims into Paradise. A rich Muslim will be asked many questions regarding how he or she spent his/her wealth. However, after attending Ippho Santosa's seminar, I now realise that Islam encourages its adherents to become rich. A rich Muslim can worship perfectly acceptably, such as going to Mecca on pilgrimage and performing good deeds to help the needy and poor. Hence, my husband and I aspire to become rich in order to perform good deeds. I support my husband in becoming an entrepreneur in order to realise our aspirations. In addition, I always supposed that voluntary alms giving (*sedekah*) was only for distributing wealth, but Ippho Santosa's seminar provided another view – that voluntary alms giving is also a method of seeking material and spiritual wealth. So, from now on I will give alms not only to distribute wealth but also to pursue material rewards from God.

I argue that Dinda and Isda's impression of Ippho Santosa's seminar represents subjectification of values. This subjectification is a result of what Rudyckyj termed "governing through affect". Ippho Santosa teaches the idea that Prophet Muhammad was rich and also a trader. He also connects the idea of becoming and being rich with the performance of good deeds in his seminar.

Another popular motivational speaker is Agus Pramono, also known as Mas Mono. He is a businessman in the restaurant and food-catering sector and his signature restaurant has around forty branches across different parts of Indonesia as well as Malaysia. His parents were farmers who could not afford to send their kids to school; Mas Mono was the only one who made it to senior high school level. He later moved to Jakarta where he started a small food stall and eventually grew it into a large business empire.

Mas Mono has also made a successful career holding motivational seminars to teach people about entrepreneurship grounded in Islamic values and principles. His seminar highlights the belief that religious commitment through devotional acts, especially *dhuha* (optional daytime prayer) and *sedekah*, contributes to successful business (Mono 2013). He teaches a strategy of business success based on three values: *sabar* (patience), *syukur*

(thankfulness) and *sedekah* (voluntary alms giving). In particular, he has stressed that *sedekah* has been a key component of his success. In accordance with the principle of *sedekah* he noted that he sets aside 10 per cent of his business profits for alms giving. By donating 10 per cent of his business profits as *sedekah*, Mas Mono claimed that God bestowed on him a considerable fortune.

Mas Mono's book and seminar have inspired business start-ups, especially among young people. They find his life story appealing as it involves developing a business from the ground up and achieving international success. Mas Mono's seminars have provided them with inspiration and showed that it is possible to achieve success if they focus on developing their business while remaining committed to Islamic devotional acts.

## Conclusion

Instead of demonstrating that the marrying of Islam and market indicates the rise of Islamism in Indonesia, this chapter argues that Islamic success manuals and self-help literatures present the idea of "Muslimism" – that is, individual-oriented piety which is fully open to and compatible with modern ways of life. Being Muslim does not mean opposition to modernity or Western market-based ideals; in fact it can go hand in hand with it. In other words, market Islam charts a path for being Muslim in a secularised and globalised world.

This article also shows that the trend of training sessions and success manual literatures that emphasise self-fulfilment and self-development increased in popularity in the late New Order thanks to the Asian financial crisis and the boom of Western self-help literatures, especially in America in the 1990s. The influx of translated self-help books into Indonesia eventually stimulated the rise of a home-grown industry, with Indonesian writers taking the ideas and principles of those books and adapting them for the local Indonesian market.

Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere (Kailani 2018), the proliferation of market Islam among the Muslim middle class has given prominence to a new class of preachers-cum-motivational speakers. They have adopted and appropriated Western popular management theories and wedded them to Islamic teachings and values. In order to circulate the idea, they actively promote it through publications and seminars, especially among urban Indonesian Muslims.

## Notes

* I would like to thank Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim, Alexander R. Arifianto and the external reviewers for their insightful comments and editorial advice on an earlier draft of this chapter.

1 This book was translated into Indonesia in 1997 as *7 Kebiasaan Manusia Yang Sangat Efektif*, Jakarta, Binarupa Aksara, 1997.

2 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was released on 28 June 1993 by Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield. One year later it became a best seller in US and Canada, inspiring motivational life stories. See www.chickensoup.com/cs.asp?cid=about (accessed 30 October 2015). Meanwhile, Robert T. Kiyosaki's *Rich Dad and Poor Dad* highlights the self-motivation required to achieve financial success in business. The book seems to have been based on the author's life experiences. Both the *Chicken Soup for Soul* series and *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* are translated into many languages, including Indonesian. The first Indonesian publisher that translated those books was Gramedia Pustaka Utama. For example, in 2000 they published it as *Rich Dad, Poor Dad: Apa yang diajarkan orang kaya pada anak—anak mereka tentang uang-yang tidak diajarkan orang miskin dan kelas menengah*.

3 Not their real names. The husband is a general practitioner and the wife is a university lecturer. The wife completed her PhD from a prestigious university in Australia.

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# 13 Epilogue

## Conservative Islam and the dilemma of Indonesian democracy

*Leonard C. Sebastian, Syafiq Hasyim and Alexander R. Arifianto*

### Introduction

It is overly optimistic to proclaim that Indonesian democracy will meet with no serious challenges in the future. The general consensus of scholars on Indonesian Islam is that it successfully balances being the majority religion and being tolerant and inclusive in a multi-religious landscape, compatible with democratic norms (Hefner 2000). This view of Indonesian Islam remains the hegemonic view today despite the fact that the observation was made over two decades ago when the context was very different.

On the other hand, other scholars have pointed out that Indonesian Islam in the last decade has deviated from its pluralistic roots towards a more 'conservative turn' (e.g. Madinier & Feillard 2011; van Bruinessen 2013; Sebastian & Nubowo, 2019; Arifianto 2020). This is mostly due to the increasing Islamisation of Indonesian society influenced by transnational Islamist groups preaching intolerance and exclusivity. The Indonesian state under the Jokowi administration has turned to utilising anti-democratic means to stem the growing tide of Islamisation and radicalism, although its effects and impacts have been uneven (Schaffer 2019). Nevertheless, such actions had resulted in some scholars implicating the government in a turn towards authoritarianism (Power 2018).

The Economist's assessment (Indonesia's score was 6.48, compared to Malaysia at 7.16 and Timor-Leste at 7.19) of Indonesia's democracy among a set of variables depicting the archipelago added strength to the thesis of the "authoritarian turn" by demonstrating that under Joko Widodo's administration Indonesia is regressing in its democratic credentials (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019). Nonetheless, Indonesia is not the only country that has demonstrated a backsliding in democratic standards. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance's (IDEA) 2019 annual report stated that the decline in democracy is a worldwide phenomenon, including the fact that "both old and young democracies are now suffering from a shrinking civic space, with declines in civil liberties, clampdowns on civil society, and restrictions on freedom of expression" (IDEA 2019: x). On the basis of these assessments, Indonesia is not unique in its experience of

democratic backsliding. Its challenges, however, are context specific. Indonesia's "authoritarian turn" has allegedly been in response to what it deemed the greater threat to its sovereignty and nationalism: Islamism and its appeals for turning the country into an Islamic state.

As a concluding chapter, it is of utmost importance for us to examine whether Indonesia's credentials as a democratic nation have been compromised due to the measures put in place to either curb or combat the influence of a growing conservative Islamism. This chapter assesses whether democracy and Islamism, in the context of Indonesia, are mutually exclusive. It also seeks to locate a possible meeting point between these two seemingly distinct ideologies. How extensive is the reach of conservative Islamism in Indonesian society before the state decides to intervene? How have Islamists and radicals utilised the narratives of democracy to propagate their own ideas and goals? What are the strategies moderate groups can adopt to combat these groups? These are some of the questions that will be examined in this epilogue.

## The legislation of shari'ah in Indonesia

The introduction of shari'ah norms into the legal and public sphere of Indonesia (or what is commonly known as "shariatization") cannot be discounted as an important factor that has shaped Islam and democracy in Indonesia (Menchik 2016; Schaffer 2019; Hadiz 2016). Often seen as incompatible with democracy, the creeping influence of shari'ah norms and regulations found strong support among certain constituencies in Indonesia. Some conservative Islamist groups like HTI and FPI even sought to place shari'ah above the nation in a bid to replace the national ideology of Pancasila.

Ironically, it was democracy and the tolerance it engendered that allowed such groups to propagate these anti-democratic ideas. At sub-national levels, there has been an unaccountable proliferation of shari'ah regulations that sought to restrict the freedoms and rights of non-Muslims and minorities (Buehler 2016). The intrusion of shari'ah norms into the daily lives of Indonesians from all walks of life not only affects the individual but also hinders the quality of democracy at the national level as it gradually restricts greater freedoms of self-expression and other forms of worship.

At the national level, the impact of 'shariatization' can be seen in the growing importance of shari'ah-based banking and economy. This means food production and consumption will increasingly be regulated under Law No. 33/2014 on Halal Product Assurance and monetary transaction governed under Law No. 21/2008 on Shari'ah Banking. In such a climate it is not surprising that Indonesian lawmakers are incentivised to block any attempts at laws seen as curbing the influence of shari'ah. On the one hand, a draft law that drew attention to violence committed against women (known in Indonesian as *Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual* (RUU PKS) or the Elimination of Sexual Violence Against Women Bill) was rejected as it was seen to promote ideas perceived to be in conflict with the shari'ah (Kompas.com 2019). On the

other, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Gerindra party have proposed a bill with a strong pro-family focus (known in Indonesian as *RUU Ketahanan Keluarga* or Family Resilience Bill). The bill adheres to and contains shari'ah-related concepts of family law and its proposed clauses have become a public controversy (Kompas.com 2019).

When Joko Widodo (Jokowi) became president in 2014, many Indonesians were optimistic that reforms would be instituted, the laws could finally be enforced and defended from religious intervention. In particular, many expected Jokowi's administration to fend off the intrusion of shari'ah elements into the law. Their expectations were understandable as Jokowi was widely seen as both a nationalist and a democratic leader. The same aspirations were seconded by members of nationalist parties and moderate Islamic groups like the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

Jokowi's first term at the helm (2014–2019) achieved very little in this respect. He failed to pave the way for legislating the RUU PKS. On the contrary, Jokowi endorsed a deeper 'shariatization' of the economy through his shari'ah-friendly policies. Although many of his supporters were disappointed, they remained hopeful that Jokowi would be able to enact measures to further curtail the 'shariatization' of Indonesian politics should he win the 2019 presidential elections. However, although Jokowi managed to win the election by defeating Prabowo Subianto, this does not necessarily mean that the expectations of his supporters will finally be realised, because Jokowi is also facing many other challenges in his administration over the next five years.

In the Jokowi programme there are at least two promising policy tools that can be used as a legal vehicle to decrease the rampant 'shariatization' of state and regional laws. The first is Jokowi's proposed omnibus law, which was mentioned in his inaugural presidential address in October 2019. Although this omnibus law is mainly intended to attract foreign investment into Indonesia, it also contains clauses that can be expanded to revise existing laws to minimise the influence of shari'ah. With the omnibus law, Jokowi promised to reform the chaotic Indonesian legal system – the chaos evident in the hundreds of shari'ah by-laws that go against the Indonesian Constitution which guarantee religious freedom. The omnibus law can also be used to revise the monopolistic authority of MUI as fatwa-maker in the context of State Law No. 21/2008 on Shari'ah Banking and State Law No. 33/2014 on Halal Product Assurance. With the omnibus law, the creeping 'shariatization' of Indonesian economy and society can be stopped or at least curbed. Citizens expect the omnibus law to significantly reduce the growth and spread of conservative Islamism in Indonesia.

Apart from the omnibus law agenda, Jokowi has continued to prioritise programmes that fight against radicalism. In the early days of his second term, Jokowi instructed all ministers in his cabinet to stem Islamic radicalism within their respective ministries. Jokowi also passed this mandate on to Ma'ruf Amin when he was appointed as the new Indonesian vice president. Ironically, Ma'ruf Amin had previously endorsed the activities of intolerant

Islamist movements like the FPI in his capacity as the general chairman of MUI. This contradiction is another challenge for the administration to resolve.

Many shari'ah-influenced laws or by-laws that encourage radicalised behaviour can be challenged or rejected through the omnibus law agenda. However, questions can be raised as to whether curtailing "shariatization" is an appropriate way to curtail growing conservative Islamism. It is not uncommon for religious actors to consider the adoption of shari'ah as their primary reason to exist as Islamic organisations, which is tolerated in Indonesia. Hence, shari'ah will always serve as an important political issue to be utilised by these actors when mobilising their followers in the public sphere.

## Political parties

The fleeting nature of political loyalties in Indonesia among political parties can clearly be observed in the 2019 general election. The Gerindra party – the main opposition party led by Prabowo Subianto, which was backed by many conservative Islamists during the campaign period – accepted an offer from Jokowi to join the ministerial cabinet. While this is not surprising when it comes to Indonesian politics, where most parties exist to win state patronage rather than fight for certain principles, it means there is no strong opposition to check the power of the ruling government.

Prabowo was awarded the post of minister of defence in Jokowi's cabinet. This ministry had received the largest allocation of the Indonesian state budget. Another Gerindra politician was appointed as the new minister of marine affairs and fisheries – also a prestigious ministry, previously headed by the unorthodox and outspoken Susi Pudjiastuti. Gerindra's agreement to join the Jokowi government reinforces the perception that Indonesian political parties do not seriously think much about the importance of democracy. Instead, the quest for national harmony and state largesse had become the overriding reason to join Jokowi's "rainbow coalition".

Many people assumed that the inclusion of the Gerindra party in Jokowi's second cabinet would minimise the use of conservative Islamists post-2019. It is already understood that Prabowo's supporters come mostly from conservative Islamist groups, while Jokowi's supporters come from the rank of secular nationalists and moderate Islamic groups. Islamist groups aligned with Prabowo, while not in the majority, are able to influence the public sphere with their conservative Islamist narratives. Consequently, intense polarisation among Muslim voters has arisen between Jokowi and Prabowo supporters. By accommodating Prabowo, many expected the polarisation between the two camps to disappear, but it did not. Instead, Prabowo's Islamist supporters decided to leave him in order to seek a new figure to reflect their political aspirations. Although there is no guarantee that whoever these Islamist groups plan to support will be as influential as Prabowo, these groups hope to continue playing a political role in Indonesian politics for the long run.

The new alliance between Gerindra and Jokowi's coalition members does, to a certain extent, minimise the impact of conservative Islam on politics. Conservative Islamist activists and groups are aware of the political games played by parties and as a consequence their allegiance to any political party is fluid. Similarly, their past alignment with the Gerindra party and other parties supporting conservative Islamist causes was not the result of ideological considerations but more for pragmatic reasons.

## Polarised Islamic civil society

Polarisation among Islamic organisations in Indonesia is nothing new. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah – Indonesia's two largest Islamic organisations – have long disagreed with regard to their understanding of Islamic doctrine and practices. In addition, Persatuan Islam (Persis), based largely in West Java, and Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti), based largely in Sumatera, have historically embraced polarised rhetorical discourses to distinguish themselves and their interpretations from those held by other Islamic groups. Today, Indonesian Islam remains divided theologically and politically. Hence, polarisation in terms of views and perspectives among Indonesian Muslims is not new and is likely to exist for the foreseeable future.

How does polarisation contribute to the decline of Indonesian democracy? Currently, polarisation exists not only among Muslim organisations and communities but also between individual Muslims nationwide. Studies indicate that the impact of greater religious polarisation in an already polarised society will likely produce a deeply divided democracy (e.g. Carothers & O'Donohue 2019). In the Indonesian context, identity-based political polarisation began in the 2012 gubernatorial election in Jakarta. There were two gubernatorial candidates during the Jakarta election – Fauzi Bowo (incumbent) and Joko Widodo (Jokowi). Bowo was supported by conservative Muslim voters because his vice gubernatorial candidate was a Muslim, while Jokowi was rejected by those voters precisely because his vice-governor candidate was Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), who is Christian and Chinese.

Polarisation among Indonesian Muslims deepened during in the presidential elections of 2014 and 2019. Indonesian Muslims started to see divisions within and along political and ideological lines. It happened because in both elections there were only two pairs of presidential candidates, those of Jokowi and Prabowo. Both candidates utilised religious biases and sentiment as weapons during the campaign season. Jokowi's campaign tended to promote progressive and moderate Islamic ideas, while Prabowo's campaign utilised clear conservative and exclusivist rhetoric. In addition, during the 2019 presidential elections, the rivalry between NU and Muhammadiyah resurfaced after a very long time of dormancy. This happened because most NU followers backed Jokowi while Muhammadiyah followers generally backed Prabowo.

While it might be overblown to expect identity-based polarisation to miraculously disappear following the 2019 general election, the after-effects of the prior political polarisation of Islamic civil society can be expected to have an effect. Simply put, Prabowo agreeing to become a participant in Jokowi's cabinet does not mean that conservative Islamist groups have tapped out from the political arena in Indonesia.

## The commercialisation of religion

Jokowi has stated that he aims to make fundamental shifts in the orientation of the Indonesian economy during the second term of his administration. Prioritising an increase in foreign direct investment in Indonesia is a major goal. However, overtly focusing on the pursuit of economic goals and development marginalises other concerns raised by Indonesian civil society activists, such as those of democracy, religious freedom and human rights.

Jokowi's priority of increasing Indonesian economic development seems to coincide with the agenda pursued by conservative Islamists – especially within MUI – to "shariatize" the Indonesian economy. Islamist activists and groups want to shariatize all aspects of economic life in Indonesia through legislation such as Law No. 21/2008 on Shari'ah Banking and Law No. 33/2014 on Halal Product Assurances. By "shariatizating" the economy, it can be argued that the public sphere is also being shariatised, as the economy is the most visible part of public sphere.

Jokowi sees the ongoing process of economic "shariatization" as an opportunity to consolidate his ambition to increase the size of the Indonesian economy. In this regard, Jokowi is essentially legitimising the shari'ah economy by implementing policies that promote its expansion. During his first administration, the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) issued the Shari'ah Economy Masterplan 2019–2024 (The Jakarta Post 2019). In October 2019, Jokowi also signed a government regulation to implement Law No. 33/2014 on Halal Product Assurance. All these policies indicate that the Jokowi administration endorses the process of shariatization of the public sector. New shari'ah economic institutions also tend to provide more space for conservative Islamic groups than moderate groups. For instance, institutions like the National Syariah Council (DSN, Dewan Syariah Nasional) within MUI tend to attract staff who come from conservative Islamic backgrounds rather than moderate ones.

The shariatization of the Indonesian economy also challenges Indonesian democracy because it introduces a model of an exclusivist economy based on a conservative interpretation of religion. This exclusivist economy creates discrimination even at the grassroots level. For instance, many Indonesian real estate developers are building shari'ah housing estates where only ideologically conservative Muslims are allowed to buy land and live, excluding not only non-Muslims but also moderate and secular-oriented Muslims.

## The promotion of conservative Islamic lifestyles

Having a conservative Islamic lifestyle approximates to a lifestyle that promotes the values of Islamic conservatism. Such a lifestyle is not only about the consumption of halal goods and services but also about the implementation of more conservative perspectives in the public sphere, evident in the issue of halal certifications. Individuals' private lives will thus have to be religiously regulated. Under rules prescribed by conservative Islamic institutions, one's lifestyle is no longer a private matter, it is a public matter. The conservative lifestyle not only promotes approved goods for consumption in the public sphere, it also endorses the right of authoritative institutions such as MUI to intervene in the public sphere. MUI thus has the additional role of regulating and interfering in the personal lives of Indonesian Muslims through its fatwa and other recommendations.

Followers of a conservative Islamic lifestyle demand not only that religious institutions like MUI issue legally binding religious edicts but also that the state enforce these edicts in order to determine which products they may consume and which they may not. State intervention means that the state has become more exclusivist on such matters. Hence, a conservative Islamic lifestyle is defined as the regulation of one's personal lifestyle by the state and religious institutions such as MUI.

The promotion of conservative lifestyles in the Muslim community can be seen in the presence of shari'ah regulations on personal lifestyles within the Indonesian legal system. Over the past decade, Indonesia has adopted national laws on matters of Islamic economy and consumption, such as Law No. 21/2008 on Shari'ah Banking and Law No. 33/2014 on Halal Product Assurances. The law on shari'ah banking means that Indonesian Muslims are expected to follow shari'ah principles in their daily dealings. For instance, they cannot charge any *riba* (interest) in economic transactions. In purchasing their everyday needs in malls, supermarkets and traditional markets, non-sharia methods of payment are prohibited. Rather, they have to use shari'ah credit cards and other approved mode of payments – mostly cash – to purchase any goods or services. Their money should not be invested in or withdrawn from a conventional bank. Muslims who work for conventional banks are expected to resign from their jobs because their salaries contain interest.

The anti-*riba* lifestyle has now become widespread in Indonesia. Some hard-line groups have recommended that all Indonesian Muslims should close down their accounts not only in conventional banks but also in shari'ah banks. This is because they consider that even shari'ah banks are not really based on pure shari'ah principles (MediaHarapan.com 2017). According to these groups, Indonesian shari'ah banks still contains some *riba* elements in their system. In addition, some shari'ah real estate developers only accept cash payments from their clients – that is, without either a conventional or a shari'ah bank as intermediary.

The strongest evidence of a conservative lifestyle can be seen in the well-publicised case of halal certification in Indonesia. In the last decade, many Indonesian Muslims have become increasingly disinclined to use restaurants that do not have halal certificates. They also do not consume goods that do not come with halal certificates, including household appliances such as TVs, refrigerators and the like. As a consequence, home appliance companies are also rushing to get halal certificates from MUI and other Indonesian halal certification authorities.

As mentioned above, such a shari'ah-based lifestyle challenges democracy because it prioritises a certain lifestyle within the Indonesian Muslim community and marginalises other forms of lifestyle, which touches on the personal lifestyle of Muslims that was previously considered a private matter.

## Regional shari'ah regulations

Conservative Islamism has found stronger support among people in urban settings than in rural ones. Rural Muslims appear to have a more flexible and nuanced understanding of their religion than urban Muslims. In Central and East Java, the majority are followers of NU. Therefore, they are more inclined towards a traditionalist interpretation of Islam that tolerates localised rituals such as the visiting of the graves of close relatives or prominent ulama (*ziarah kubur*), recitations of prayers in memory of deceased relatives (*tahlilan*), and other variant practices. With regional autonomy introduced through Law No 22/1999 on Regional Autonomy, the authority of regional governments was strengthened as they are granted with numerous powers and authorities that were previously the monopoly of the national government. While this is generally seen as a boon, regional autonomy also provides space for influential clerics and Islamic groups in the region to demand the enactment of religious by-laws by local governments.

Since the enactment of regional autonomy in Indonesia, hundreds of shari'ah by-laws have been proposed, enacted and implemented – albeit driven by various motives – at provincial and district/city level. Local activists who promote shari'ah by-laws are known to be especially shrewd by not pushing for 'shari'ah' or 'Islamic' labels but using general names such as local regulation to promote education and the like (Buehler 2008, 2016; Bush 2008; Nicholas & Mietzner 2009). This is because they know that using specifically religious terms goes against the Indonesian constitution.

The proliferation of local shari'ah by-laws in the last two decades has attracted a lot of grassroots support, in line with contemporary developments in Indonesian politics. The use of identity politics during elections corresponds to the rise in conservative Islamism and helps explain the rapid rise in the number of local shari'ah by-laws. Islamist activities at regional level are more diverse as well as more popular. The 212 movement that emerged from the Jakarta protests of 2016 was replicated at a large number of localities. Reunions of 212 movement activists have taken place in numerous Indonesian

regions, including Sumatera, Makassar, West Kalimantan, West Java and Madura Island (Kumparan.com 2018; Detik.com 2019). Many regional governments tolerate the presence of the 212 movement activists and, to some extent, provide them with support. This phenomenon is dangerous because it allows intolerant narratives to spread at regional level.

Beside the phenomenon of local shari'ah by-laws, local-level democracy is often determined by an alliance between religious leaders, politicians and business oligarchs. Fatwas or other rulings issued by religious leaders also receive support from notable local politicians and business oligarchs. The influence and power wielded by the three groups inevitably weakens democracy at the regional level.

## Socio-economic justice

Conservative Islamic narratives have become powerful among many Indonesians not only because they are peppered with political theology but also because they are made to fit in with current socio-economic issues. The narrative of social and economic justice that conservative Islam has tried to foster is that Muslims have become the victims of both capitalism and socialism and Islam is the answer. According to conservative Islamists, the primary factor that had led to the backwardness of the Muslim community is not theology, but secular ideologies like capitalism and socialism.

Such arguments were utilised by the followers of the banned HTI movement and have now become a widespread theological prism popularly adopted by other conservative Islamic groups of Indonesia like the FPI, FUI and others – especially after Aksi Bela Islam 212 (ABI, Action to Defend Islam 212) in 2016. It is believed that Indonesian Muslims should fight against the socio-economic injustices of capitalism and socialism if they are to gain power in their own country. In this regard, the struggle for Islam is seen as an alternative political and economic perspective, with Islam promoted as a solution. For example, *Media Umat* (a new online media allegedly owned by HTI) states that the Muslim community should forge a middle path between secularism-capitalism and socialism-communism (Mediaumat.news 2018). The widespread narrative of social and economic injustice among Indonesian Muslims, especially after the 212 action, can be seen as a successful effort by HTI to promote its political vision. This narrative has also been utilised as a unifying call for different Islamist organisations in Indonesia to unite and consolidate.

Socio-economic justice as defined by the Islamic conservative movement in Indonesia attracts a lot of attention because it touches upon real problems faced by people. Most Indonesian Muslims are poor in comparison to their non-Muslim friends. Those who join such movements are not just low-income Muslims, however; they include the educated and professionals with a middle-class background. The narratives of socio-economic justice promise a kind of panacea for them and allow them to express their political aspirations.

In many cases, however, the demands for socio-economic justice have also been used to justify religious and racial divisions. While social and economic justice still occupies some space in the basic narrative, in many cases the more dominant narratives are identity-based ones – particularly that of differentiating "good" and "pious' Muslims from "evil" non-believers or "liberal" Muslims.

As seen in the empirical chapters of this book, the deployment of identity-based and socio-economic justice narratives by conservative Islamist groups is expected to continue in the near future. This raises important questions as to whether Indonesia's democratic system and institutions will be in a position to promote greater social justice and economic equality.

## Concluding remarks

Our book concludes with a prediction that conservative Islamism will remain an important influence on political and socio-economic development in Indonesia for the foreseeable future. Today these conservative groups have expanded, and they are not limited to utilising just one vehicle – that of religion – to express themselves politically but have other means to communicate their political viewpoints. Socio-political issues such as whether non-Muslims can be elected as national or local leaders and economic issues such as halal certification and shari'ah housing estates can be instrumentalised by these groups as part of their political aspirations.

However, it should be pointed out that while conservative Islamist narratives are dominating the Indonesian public sphere, counter-narratives from moderate Islamic groups like Nahdlatul Ulama are also enjoying a resurgence, thanks to their partnership with the Jokowi administration. The ongoing contest between these two groups serves as a barometer which helps predict the future of democracy in Indonesia. The close alliance between moderate Islamic groups and activists and the Jokowi administration is also very problematic. The administration should learn lessons from the Suharto era, which instituted tough crackdown measures against conservative Islamist activists and groups while bestowing favours and patronage to moderate Islamic thinkers like Nurcholish Madjid. Madjid's efforts to promote neo-modernist Islam in Indonesia failed because moderate Islamic groups became too dependent on state support, losing their credibility among many ordinary Muslims.

The rise of conservative Islam in Indonesia in the post-Suharto era is largely due to the more open political atmosphere, as Muslims can now freely choose which interpretation of Islam they wish to follow from a "marketplace of religious ideas" instead of just following mainstream Islamic groups and preachers (Arifianto 2020). However, we must remain hopeful that growing conservative Islamism in Indonesia is seen as part of the open, liberating nature of growing democratisation in Indonesia. This could happen if Indonesian policymakers and civil society activists are able to use critical

narratives within conservative Islam, such as their desire to promote more social justice and economic equality while reducing power among Indonesian oligarchs, as a form of positive feedback in order to improve Indonesia's quality of democracy. Conservative Islamists should be seen by the Indonesian government and moderate Muslims not as an enemy to be vanquished, but as a potential dialogue partner to help determine the future of the Indonesian democratic system. While moderates should continue to reject the conservative call for the institution of shari'ah law as a legal foundation of the state, they should take their grievances about economic equality and social justice seriously, so that Indonesian democracy may work better to improve the quality of life for all Indonesians.

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# Index

Page numbers in italics refer to figures. Page numbers in bold refer to tables. Page numbers followed by "n" refer to notes.


1945 Constitution 1, 42, 126, 135, 138, 170

*abangan* 55, 56, 61, 64, 101
Abdurrahman, Maman 156
Abdurrahman, Maksum 63
Abdurrahman, Moeslim 81
Abdurrahman, Rahmat 185
Abdurrahman, Yusran 185
Action of Defending Islam *see* Aksi Bela Islam (ABI)
*adat* 5
Affandi, Choer 64, 72
*ahl al sunnah wal jama'ah see* Sunni
*ahl al-kitab* 85
*ahl hall wal aqdi* 147, 151
*ahlul batil* 46
*ahlul bi'dah* 46
*ahlul haq* 46
Ahlus Sunnah 56, 64, 98, 104, 106, 186, 187
Ahmad, Malik 182
Ahmadis 2, 3, 40, 43, 46–47, 124
Ahmadiyyah 8, 18, 124
Ahmed, Shahab 50n
Ahnaf, Iqbal S. 10, 146
Ahok (Basuki Tjahaja Purnama) 3, 9, 10, 62, 65, 86, 88, 89, 100, 116, 119, 120, 121, 124, 125, 126, 128, 130
*ajengan* 55, 56, 58, 59
Akhmad, Mirza Ghulam 124
Akim 9, 54
Aksi Bela Islam (ABI) 3, 9, 10, 44
Aksi Bela Islam 212 protests 46, 62, 80, 88, 116, 121, 127, 128, 129, 146, 155, 185, 217–218
Al-Afghani, Jamaluddin 57
al-Asy'ari, Abu Hasan 105
al-Baghdadi, Junaid 105
al-Baghdadi, Abdurrahman 63
Al-Bani 195n
Al-Banna, Hassan 49, 163, 167, 172, 173, 195n
al-Bantani, Syeikh Nawawi 63
al-Hudaybi, Hasan 168
Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid 15
Al-Ghazali, Muhammad 195n
Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah (ANAS) 65
Aliansi Satu Cinta 48
Ali, Fachry 5
*aliran* 57
*aliran kepercayaan* 181
*aliran sesat* 7, 124
Al-Islam 137
Al-Ittihadiyatul Islamiyah (AII) 59
Al-Jaulani, Syeikh 154
Al-Jufri, Salim Segaf 166, 172
Al-Khairat 166
Al-Khattath, Muhammad 156, 157
Al Makky,Ibnur Hajar 108
Al Maliki, Muhammad Alawi 108
al-Maturidi, Abu Mansur 105
al-Ma'un 9, 81, 90, 91
Al-Mukmin 147
al-Nabhani, Taqiyuddin 195n
Al-Qardawi, Yusuf 201
al-Qarn, Aidh 202
Al-Qashwa 203
al-Wahhab, Muhammad Ibn Abd 184
*amanah* 123
*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* 117
Amin, Ma'ruf 2, 10, 68, 69, 72, 88, 119, 212

Aminuddin, Hilmi 63, 164, 172
*amir* 147, 151
Amrih, Pitoyo 201
Anderson, Ben 57, 73n
Ansor Youth Movement 87
anti-Ahmadi movement 43, 45, 47
*aqidah* 117, 118, 126
*aqidah aswaja* 100, 103, 105
Arifianto, Alexander 1, 50n, 210
*Arrahmah* 152, 154, 158
Arya, Bima 155
*asas tunggal* 181
Ash'arites 105
Asy'ari, Hasyim 99, 100, 105, 106, 107, 108
Attaki, Hanan 66
Awwas, Irfan Suryahardy 147, 152, 154, 155, 157, 158
Azzam, Abudllah 154

Ba'asyir, Abu Bakar 10, 146, 154, 156, 157, 158, 159
Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (BPUPKI) 149
Bandung Institute of Technology *see* Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)
Banser 86, 142
Banten 54
Bashori, Luthfi 98, 99, 101, 106, 107
Basri, Hasan 124
Baswedan, Anies 169
Batubara, Abdul Somad 98
"Belief in Almighty God" 1
Believers of the Faith 9, 80, 86, 87, 91
Betawi 21, 29
Beureueh, Daud 73n
*bid'ah* 6, 57, 64, 83,109, 166
Bin Baaz, Abdullah 63
Board of Islamic Propaganda in Indonesia, 164
Bogor Agricultural Institute *see* Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB)
Bruinessen, Martin van 6, 44, 67
Bubat, Battle of 73n
Buddhism 30, 31, 85
Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD) 154
Burhani, Ahmad Najib 9, 80
Bush, Robin 149, 151
Buya Yahya *see* Maarif Yahya Zainul

caliphate *see khilafah*
Canfield, Jack 200
Carnegie, Dale 201
Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) 42
Central Java 112n
Chavez, Leo R. 45
*Chicken Soup for the Soul* 200
Christianity 30, 31, 32, 54, 83–85, 120n, 127
*churafat* 83
Cirebon Sultanate 55
civil Islam 6, 80
Committee for the Preparation of Islamic Sharia' Enactment *see* Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariah Islam (KPPSI)
conservatism *see* Islamic conservatism
Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims *see* Masyumi
coronavirus 1
Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) 172
Council of Indonesian Islamic Propagation *see* Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII)
Covey, Steven. R 200
Crescent Star Party *see* Partai Bulan Bintang

Dahlan Ahmad 81, 91
*dajjal* 106
*dakwah* 125, 167
*dakwah* movement 63–72, 181
*dakwah kultural* 9, 85, 83, 84, 85
Darmadi, Dadi 8, 40
*darul 'ahdi wa al-syahadah* 9, 83,85,90
Darul Islam 9, 55, 146, 147
Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia (DI/NII) 18, *19*
*daulah islamiyah see* Islamic State of Indonesia
Davenport, Christian 157, 158
Dawn Fighters *see* Pejuang Subuh
Dayak tribe 48
decentralisation 9
deconfessionalisation 181, 194n
Defence Council of the Islamic Community *see* Dewan Pertahanan Umat Islam
Defending Islam Movement (Defending Islam Action) *see* Aksi Bela Islam (ABI)
democratisation 7, 11, 44, 159
Dermawan, Windy 9, 54
Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) 65, 164, 184, 195n
Dewan Pertahanan Umat Islam 60

*din wa al-dawlah* 134
Dutch administration 58–59, 60
Dwikarna, Agus 195
*dzikir* 166

*Economist, The* 210
Educational Movement *see* *tarbiyah* movement
Education of Pancasila Morality *see* Pendidikan Moral Pancasila (PMP)
Effendy, Bahtiar 5, 50n
Eid al-Fitri 85
Esposito, John L. 201

Fachruddin, A.R. 82
Fatah, Amir 73n
*fatwas* 7, 10, 43, 117, 118-119, 123–127, 130, 131, 194, 218
Fihiruddin Muqthi *see* Jibril, Abu
*fiqh see* Islamic law
"Five Principles" *see* Pancasila
Forum Ukhuwah Pemuda Islam (FUPI) 185
Forum Umat Islam 116
freedom of worship 1, 211
Front Pembela Islam (FPI) 2, 18, *19*, 62, 90, 91, 116, 121, 128, 134, 158, 190
*furu'iyah* 64

Gadjah Mada University (UGM) 153
Geertz, Clifford 5, 6, 55, 57, 73n
Gerakan Nasional Pembela Fatwa-Majelis Ulama Indonesia, National Movement for
Fatwa Defender-Council of Indonesian Ulama (GNPF-MUI) 2, 127, 128, 129, 130
Gerakan Umat Islam Bersatu (GUIB) 47
*gerakan tarbiyah see* *tarbiyah* movement
Gerindra 138, 212, 213
Gilsenan, Michael 173
Ginanjar, Ary 199, 203
Godly nationalism 8, 43, 122
group-level efficacy 17, 27
Gunungjati, Sunan 56
Gus Sholah *see* Wahid Salahuddin
Gymnastiar, Abdullah 66, 199

Hadith 5
Haenni, Patrick 198
Hafiduddin, Didin 169
Hajar, Ibnu 73n
Halal Product Assurances (Law No. 33/2014) 216
*halaqah* 136, 168
Halida, Rizka 8, 14
Halim, Abdul 63
Hamzah, Fahri 163, 175–176
*haram* 84
Harefa, Andrias 201
Hasan, Azwar 195
Hasyim, Syafiq 1,10, 50n, 61, 116, 210
Hauswedell, Peter Christian 5
Hawwa, Said 195n
Hayyi, Ridwan Abdul 154
Hefner, Robert 6, 67
*hijrah* 62
Hijabers Komuniti 48
Hilmy, Masdar 10, 133
Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam 74n, 182
Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (HMI MPO) 164, 182, 183, 195n
Hinduism *30*, *31*, 56, 57
*hisab* 85
Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) 2, 4, 9, 10, 18, 19, 62, 80, 85, 86, 87, 91, 133–143, 172, 173
Hoesterey, James 199
Human Rights Watch 2

*i'dad* 154, 157, 188
*ilhaq* 124
*ikhwan* 164
Iman, Sohibul 163, 170, 172
Indonesia Islamic Student *see* Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII)
Indonesian Islamic University Students Association (HMI) *see* Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam
Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) 9
Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) 9, 40, 80, 87, 91
Indonesian Constitutional Court (MK) 87
Indonesian Council of Youth Intellectuals and Ulama *see* Majelis Intelektual Ulama Muda Indonesia (MIUMI)
Indonesian Islamic Council *see* Majlis Islam A'laa Indonesia
Indonesian Islamic State *see* Negara Islam Indonesia (NII)
Indonesian Mujahidin Council *see* Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)
Indonesian Muslim Congress *see* Konggres Umat Islam Indonesia (KUII)

Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) 14
Indonesian Ulama Council *see* Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)
Institute for the Study of Islam and Society *see* Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKiS)
Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences *see* Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab
Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) 62
Institut Supah, 60
Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) 63
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, The 210
Inter Religious Community Relations in the Framework of NKRI (*Prinsip Ajaran Islam mengenai Hubungan Antarumat Beragama dalam Bingkai Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia [NKRI]*) 126
Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence *see* Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (BPUPKI)
Iqbal, Asep 95
Ishaq, Luthfi Hasan 164
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) 154
*Islam de marché see* market Islam
Islamic conservatism: introduction 1–12, as a growing trend 117–118, lifestyle 216
Islamic Convert Studies *see* Kajian Mualaf
Islamic Defenders Front *see* Front Pembela Islam (FPI)
Islamic law 105
Islamic liberalism *see* liberalism
Islamic literature 15, 22–23, 41–43, 48–49, 201–202; *jihadi* 48; popular genres 201; *salafi* 49; *tahriri* 48; *tarbawi* 48
Islamic modernism 4, 69 *see also* liberalism
Islamic morality 117
Islamic mysticism 105
Islamic organisations; polarisation 214–215
Islamic orthodoxy 8; as a framework to defend Islam 44–45, at the regional level 45–50, *dakwah* movement 71
Islamic revolutionary council 147
Islamic solidarity 88
Islamic State of Indonesia 18, 85, 101
Islamic Student Association Board to Save the Organisation *see* Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (HMI MPO)
Islamic Trade Organisation *see* Syarikat Islam
Islamisation 2, 56, 163, 167, 168, 188, 210
Islamism 14, 15, 18, 20, 23, 28, 33, 48, 181; in contrast to *tarbawi* 49; phases 198; and radicalism 41–42; re-Islamisation 198 *see* also pragmatic Islamism
Islamist mobilisation 29, 146
Islamist radical groups 14, 15, 18; acts 25; determinants of support 22–29; supporters 21, 26, 39
Islam Nusantara 66, 67, 74n, 97, 99

Jabhah Al-Nusrah 154, 159
Jaelani,Ahmad Qurthubi 108
*jaelangkung* 84
Jaiz, Hartono Ahmad 46
Jalil, Muhammad Ikhwan Abdul 185
Jamaah Ansorut Tauhid (JAT) 151, 182
Japanese occupation 59
Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL) 8, 40, 43, 46
*jathilan* 84
Jawaz, Yazid bin Abdul Qodir 63
Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) 147
Jemaah Tabligh 62
Jemaah Tarbiyah 163–167
Jibril, Abu 154, 156, 158
Jibril, Muhammad 154, 156, 157
*jihadi* 48, 49
Jokowi *see* Widodo, Joko
Judaism 85, 127
Jurdi, Syarifuddin 182
Justice Party *see* Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)

Kadir, Syamsudin 46
*kafir* 46, 101
*Kajian Mualaf* 48
Kailani, Najib 11, 198
Kalla, Jusuf 28, 124, 129
Karnavian, Tito 128, 129
Kartosuwiryo 55, 60
Kathir, Ibn 49
*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* 122
*Khadijah* 203
*khadim al-hukumah* 117
Khalid, Saleh 195n
*khilafah* 10, 32, 62, 134–138, 140, 142, 143
Khittah NU 1926 9
*kitab kuning* 5, 57, 64, 137

Kiyosaki, Robert 200, 202
Klandermans, Bert 16
Klinik Nikah 48
*kolot* 5
Komando Kesiapsiagaan Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah *(KOKAM)* 87, 141
Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariah Islam (KPPSI) 185
Komite Persiapan Penerapan Syariah Islam (KPPSI) 149
Kongres Umat Islam Indonesia (KUII) 185 195n*
Krakatau Steel 204
*kyai* 55, 73n, 97

*lajnah tanfiziyah* 152
*lakum di-nukum wa liyadi-n* 84,85
Lanti, Irman 9, 54, 57
Laskar Jihad 18, *19*
*laskar* 60
*laskar mujahidin* 152, 153
La Tahzan 201
Law on Civil Society Organisations (Law No. 17/2013) 138
Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (LKP) 163
Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKiS) 153, 163
Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (LIPIA) 62
Lev, Daniel S. 5
Liberal Islamic Network (JIL) *see* Jaringan Islam Liberal
liberalism 4, 46, 100, 101, 109, 110
Linrung, Tamsil 195
LSI *see* Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI)

Maarif, Ahmad Syafii 84, 88
Maarif, Yahya Zainul 98, 99
*madhabism* 4
Madjid, Nurcholish 61, 74n, 169, 219
*madzhab* 64
Magading, Fathul Muin Daeng *see* Muin
Mahmudi, Yon 10, 163
Majelis Intelektual Ulama Muda Indonesia (MIUMI) 185
Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa Indonesia 92n
Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) 4, 10, 146; decline 157–159, origins 147–150; role in 212; rally 154–157
Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) 2, 6, 7, 10, 116–130
Majlis Islam A'laa Indonesia 58
Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) 117, 121, 134
Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia *see* Masyumi
*manhaj* 6
Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah, Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah 165
*Manifestation of the Tarbiyah Movement: What is the Muhammadiyah Position?*, *see* *Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah, Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah*
Manji, Irshad 153
*marhalah istilam al-hukmi*, 136, 137
market Islam 11, 199
Marriage Clinic *see* Klinik Nikah
Masduki, Teten 41
Mass Organisations *see* Organisasi Massa
Masyhur, Mustafa 195n
Masyumi 5, 58–60, 68, 181–182
Mathla'ul Anwar 118
Matta, Anis 165, 172
*Maturidites* 105
Maududi, Al 201
Maulid 64
Maulid Nabi 57
McGee, Micki 200
Media Umat 218
Menchik, Jeremy 7, 8, 42, 43
*manajemen qalbu* 199
Mietzner, Marcus 67
*mihwar tanzim* 168
millennial generation 46, 48, 49, 62, 67
*moderen* 5
modernist Muslim movement 57; *see also* Islamic modernism
Moerdani, L B, 194
Muadz, Abdullah 63
*mubah* 84
Muhammad, Abduh 57
Muhammad, Husein 103
Muhammadiyah 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 57, 58, 80, 81, 85–91, 92n, 118, 121, 135, 137–141, 165; foundational tenets 83; members 82, 83; pragmatic Islamism 90; three main social activities 81; three perspectives 88
Muhammadiyah Youth (Pemuda Muhammadiyah) 88
*muhasabah* 137
Muhtadi, Burhanuddin 8, 14
Muin 182

Mujahidin KOMPAK 182
Mujahidin, Risalah 154
*munafiq* 46
Munarman 156
Munawaroh mosque 154
Muslim Batak 21
Muslim Brotherhood 168, 173, 188
Muslim identity and collective deprivation 14–15, 29–33
Muslimism 199
*mu'tazili* 103
Muzadi, Hasyim 156
Muzakkar, Abdul Aziz Kahar 150, 73n
Muzakkar, Kahar 150
Muzakki, Akh 201–202
My Hijrah Companions *see* Sahabat Hijrahku

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 58, **68**, 80, 85, 86, 88, 95, 97, 121, 129, 135, 141–143, 146; elections vs. PKS 166-167; stance on Ahmadiyya 41; structural vs. cultural 61
Nahdlatul Wathan 47, 58
*Nahdliyyin* 100
Najih, Muhammad 109, 112n
Nakamura, Mitsuo 91n, 92n
Nashir, Haedar 90
Nasir, Bachtiar 127, 128
Nasr, Hosen 201
National Agency for Combating Terrorism (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, BNPT) 88
National Amanah Party (PAN) 171
National Anti-Syiah Alliance *see* Aliansi Nasional Anti Syiah (ANAS)
Natsir, Mohammad 184
National Awakening Party *see* Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa
National Mandate Party *see* Partai Amanat Nasional
Negara Islam Indonesia 60
Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI) 181
*Negara Pancasila sebagai Da-ral-'Ahdi wa al-Syaha-dah* 86
New Order 5–7, 61, 97, 137,147
Novanto, Setya 176
Nubowo, Andar 11, 67, 181
NU Garis Lurus 2, 7, 9, 10, 95–111
Nurwahid, Hidayat 165, 169

omnibus law 212
One Love Alliance *see* Aliansi Satu Cinta
Organisasi Massa 10
Ormas *see* Organisasi Massa

Padjadjaran University 63
*palu arit* 40
Pancasila 1, 5, 7, 42, 86, 90, 92n, 122, 126, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 181, 182, 195n
Pancasila State as the Abode of Covenant and the Space of *Testimony see Negara Pancasila Sebagai Da-ral-'Ahdi wa al-Syaha-dah*
Paramadina Foundation 74n
Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) 62
Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB) 62
Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) 62
Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) 62
Partai Kesejahteraan Sejahtera (PKS) 3, 10, 163, 165; elections vs. NU 166–167; *see also* Jemaah Tarbiyah
Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) 59
Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) 72
Party of Liberation *see* Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)
*pasal karet* 139
Patria, Nezar 41
Pejuang Subuh 48
Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII) 164
Pemuda Ansor 142
Pemuda Hijrah 66
Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan MUI 118–120, 122, 124, 127, 129
Pendidikan Moral Pancasila (PMP) 181
*pengajian* 66
Penghayat Kepercayaan 9, 92n *see* Believers of the Faith
*penistaan agama* 124
people of the book *see ahl al-kitab*
Peraturan Daerah Shariah *see* Perda Syariah
perceived injustice 17, 29
*perda maksiat* 150
*perdasee* Perda Syariah
Perda Syariah 149–150
Perppu No. 2/2017 on the Amendment of Act No. 17/2013 on Mass Organisations (Organisasi Massa, Ormas) 10, 86, 92, 133, 138–139, 141–143
Persatuan Islam 63, 118, 164
Persatuan Umat Islam Indonesia 59
*pesantren* 55–56, 73n; religious practices 57; difference with *dakwah* movement 64

Persis – Islamic Union (Persis, The Unity of Islam) *see* Persatuan Islam
Pipes, Daniel 32
pluralism 110
political efficacy 17, 22, 23, 27
political Islam 3, 7
Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Huda 72
Prabowo *see* Subianto, Prabowo
pragmatic Islamism 89– 90
Pramono, Agus 202, 205
Prophet Muhammad 41, 107,126,127, 153, 166, 203, 205
Prosperous Justice Party *see* Partai Kesejahteraan Sejahtera Sejahtera (PKS)
*priyayi* 55–56, 73n
Pudjiastuti. Susi 213
Purnama, Basuki Tjahaja *see* Ahok
*pusat-pusat keunggulan* 90

Qardhawi, Yusuf 63, 195n
*qiyas* 104
*qoidah aminah* 152
Qoumas, Yaqut Cholil 87
*qunut* 64
Qur'an 5, 49, 81; and Hadith120, 124, 135, 137, 142, 164, 172, 188, 190, 203; and the Sunnah 186, 187, 188
Qutb, Sayyid 49, 172, 195n, 201

radicalism 15, 25, 28–29, 34n, 42, 46, 188; radicalisation 15; under Jokowi 210–212
Rahman, Fazlur 74n
Ramadan 85
Ramli, Idrus 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 112n
Rasmin, Mohammad Zaitun 127,128, 185, 195
*Rasul Allah* 186
Rasul, Haji 42
Rasyid, Daud 169
Reformasi era 9, 62
relative deprivation 17, 22
Religion of Java 5
religious intolerance 2, 8, 20, 45–46
Renville Agreement 60
*riba* 216
*Rich Dad, Poor Dad* 200
Ricklefs, M.C. 63
Ridha, Abu 164, 169
Ridha, Rashid 57
Ridwan, Cholil 124
*Risalah Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah* 105
*Risalah Mujahidin* 154, 157, 158
Rudnyckyj, Daromir 199, 203
*ru'yah* 86
*ruqyah* 165
RUU Ketahanan Keluarga 212

Saguni, Qasim 184, 195
*Sahabat Hijrahku* 48
*Sajadah Fajar* 48
*salafi* 11, 48,62, 63, 164; literature 49, salafism 181
Salafi quasi-organisation Wahdah Islamiyah 118
Salafism-Wahabism 184
Salim, Arksal 149, 150
Santosa, Ippho 202, 203, 204, 205
*santri* 55, 73n, 86, 88
Santri Day 66, 86, 88
*santri kolot* 5
*santrinisasi* 61, 62, 67
Sanusi, Ahmad 63
Sarekat Islam 58
Sebastian, Leonard 1, 50n, 67, 210
*sedekah* 203, 205
Sema, Mansur 195
Sembiring, Tifatul 164, 170
*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, The* 200
*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Versi Semar dan Pandawa, The* 201
Shafi'ites 105
*sharia* (*shari'ah*) 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 25, 62, 106, 134, 137, 138, 142; failure and division 151–152; implementation 148-150; shariatisation 119, 211, 212, 215
Shari'ah Banking and Law 215, 216
Shia Islam 40, 47, 122, 124
Shidiq, Mahfudz 163
Shihab, Rizvi 28
Shihab, Habib Rizieq 128, 156, 157
Shi'ism 102, 103, 109, 110
Shiites 2, 102
*sholat* 155
Siauw, Felix 49, 50n
Siddiq, Ahmad 183, 195n
Sidogiri, Pesantren 111n
Siradj, Said Aqil 95, 97, 101, 102, 103, 104, 109, 110, 111n
*slametan* 83
social identity 14–17, 22, 23, 33, 34n
social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) 16, 33; hypothesis 17; indicators 22; socio-psychological factors 16–17, 29; variables 22–23

social media 9; use by Muslim groups 43, 46, 63, in *dakwah* movement 66–67, 99, 110, 159, 166
social movement organisation (SMO) 15–16
social movement theory 8
socio-economic justice 29–32 (perception of), 218–219
Somad, Ustadz Abdul 43, 50n
South Sulawesi 11
Special Detachment (Detasemen Khusus, Densus) 88
Standard Chartered Islamic Study Circle (Kelompok Studi Islam Standard Chartered, KSICC) 136
Straight Path NU *see* NU Garis Lurus
*Suara Mujahidin* 152
Subianto, Prabowo 55, 59, 62, 68–69, 68, 124, 157, 174, 212–215
Sudjana, Eggy 156, 195n
Sufi 60, 124, 163, 165, 166, 167, 172, 173
Suharto 5, 6, 14, 97, 117, 124, 125, 130, 136, 147, 181, 219
Sukarno 1, 4, 5
Sultan Agung 56
Sunda 21, 29
Sundanese 54–55
*SundaWiwitan* 55
Sungkar, Abdullah 147, 154
Sunnah 46
*sunnatullah* 4
Sunni 2, 43, 102, 105, 106, 124
*Sunni-Syafi'i* 105
Syaikhu, Ahmad 63
*Syamsuddin, Din* 87, 89, 92n, 124
Syariah *see sharia* (*shari'ah*)
Syarikat Islam 7
*syukur* 205
*syuriyyah* 105

*tabligh* 123
*Tabligh akbar* 167
*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* 49
*Tafsir tematik al-Qur'an* 83–85
*tahdhir* 109
*tahlilan* 57, 64, 217
*tahriri* 48
*takhayul* 83
Tanjung, Alfian 40, 41, 42, 156
Tanoe, Harry 100
*tarbawi* 48–49
*tarbiyah* 62, 181, 188
*tarbiyah jihadiyah* 154
*tarbiyah movement* 62, 165
*ta'rifat* 137
*tasawwuf see* Islamic mysticism
*Tashwirul Afkar* 58
*tathbiqus sharia* 147, 150
*tathqif* 137
*tauhid* 155
*tawassul* 83, 165
*tawsiyah* 118, 119, 123, 124, 130
Taymiyyah, Ibn 122
*telaah kitab* 137
*tenda umat Islam* 118
Tentara Islam Indonesia (TNI) 55
Thalib, Muhammad 151, 154, 157, 158
Thrift, Nigel 201
transnational Islamic caliphate *see khilafah*
Tuhuleley, Said 82, 91
*Tujuh Keajaiban Rezeki* 202–203
TVMU 87
TVRI 87, 92n

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta 40, 43
*ukhuwah Islamiyah* 185
ulama 46, 80, 87, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 104, 108, 118, 119, 120, 125, 126, 130, 149
Ulum, Uu Ruzhanul 72
*ummah* 32, 148
Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia *see* Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI)
United Development Party *see* Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)
United Muslim Movement *see* Gerakan Umat Islam Bersatu (GUIB)
Utomo, Budi 58
Uyainah, Sufyan bin 109

Wahdah Islamiyah 11, 62, 18; ideology186–189, the rise of 182–186, union of Islam 189–192
Wahhabi, 62, 98, 102, 103, 109, 110, 166, 173
Wahid, Abdurrahman 95, 104, 125
Wahid Institute 14
Wahid, Salahuddin 101, 104
*walisongo* 173
Watson, C.W. 201–202
West Java 9, 54–72, 70; *dahkwa* movement 63–72; future of politics 67–72; voting patterns 68–69
*Why Social Movements Die?* 157

Wiktorowicz, Quintan 18
Widodo, Joko 2, 40, 68, 86, 88, 116, 121, 122, 124, 128, 129, 130, 138, 212; elections vs. Prabowo 55, 59, 67–72, 213–215
Wiranto 138

*yasinan* 165
Yayasan Fathul Muin (YFM) 184
yellow book *see kitab kuning*
Yudhoyono, Susilo Bambang 172
Yusanto, Ismail 32
Yusuf, Ahmad Firman 173
Yuzuf, Muzammil 163

*zakat* 150, 203, 204
Zarathustra 127
*ziarah* 64
*ziarah kubur* 127, 217
Zidni, Irfan 42

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